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L I F E A N D W R I T I N G S

O F

ARTHUR ASHLEY SYKES, D.D.

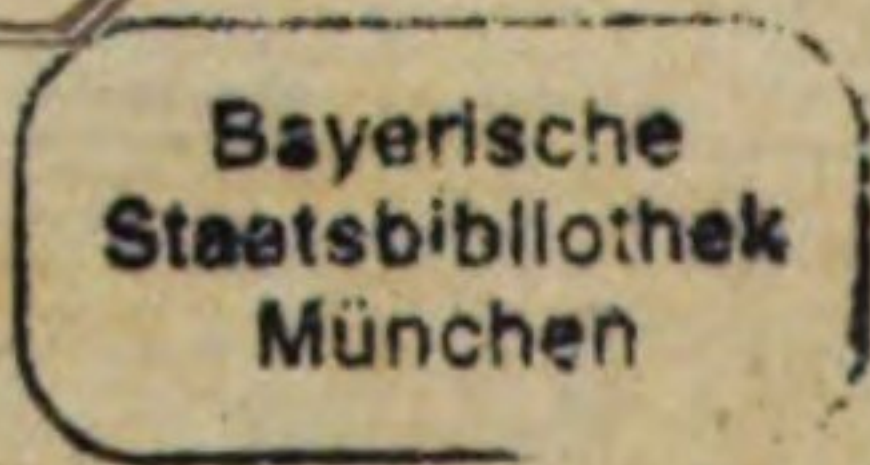
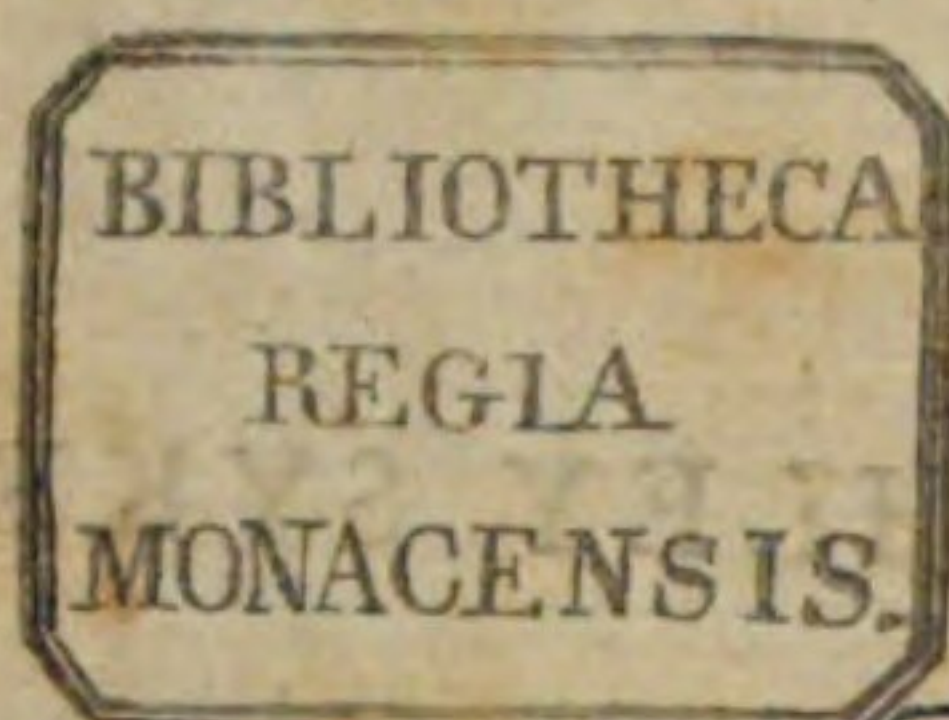
By JOHN DISNEY, D.D. F.S.A.

L O N D O N :

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M DCC LXXXV.



P R E F A C E.

THE writer of the following Memoirs, did not undertake to pay this tribute to the memory of Dr. Sykes, from that partiality to his character, which is sometimes the result of personal knowledge, or a perfect similitude of sentiment; but from an high and general regard for the great learning and zeal which appear in his defences of the religion of Christ, the rights of protestantism, and the civil liberties of his country. Nor does he, by any means, make himself responsible for any particular opinions maintained by Dr. Sykes, either of a civil or religious nature; but on the contrary, will be found to differ from him upon many very important subjects, both in religion and politics.

It is more than probable that Dr. Sykes would, were he now living, and able to speak for himself, see reason to change many opinions which he once believed, and maintained to be true. It is even more than presumable, that his sentiments underwent some alteration in the

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latter part of his life ; for, in a letter dated in February 1754, he says, in regard to the list of his works printed in Mr. Masters's history of Corpus Christi college, Cambridge; " I have taken the
 " liberty you gave me of filling up, altering, &c. as you see. I have added some
 " pieces to what you already observed :
 " and perhaps more might still be added :
 " but enough is already said. And had I
 " been advised with at first, I should not
 " have mentioned several that are there." ^a

This ingenuous observation, it is apprehended, was the result of his doubts in regard to the *matter*, rather than the *manner* of some of his publications ; in which last respect, he could have no reason to wish any thing to be erased, which he had committed to the press. And, if I might hazard a conjecture, where there is no *certain* ground for the observation, I should be inclined to think, that when he wrote the letter, he had more particularly in his mind, his *Case of subscription*, and *Reply to Dr. Waterland*.

A change of sentiment is a natural, and, generally speaking, a commendable, and by no

^a From a copy of the Letter, communicated by Mr. Masters.

no means an uncommon or blameable consequence of inquiry. The advance of all knowledge and truth is progressive, and to a liberal mind, it affords great satisfaction to observe her gradual steps, not only in the revolution of ages, but in the mind of the same man. While I admire the unceasing assiduity and watchfulness; while I venerate the eminent abilities and learning, and am persuaded of the integrity of my author; I think him to have been mistaken in many things, and have been free to observe them. And I scruple not to declare myself to be above the little limitations of an exact agreement in opinion, as the test of my esteem, and regard for any worthy and valuable character. I believe all the works of Dr. Sykes to have been designed by him to advance scriptural knowledge, and the full liberty of professing our religious faith; or to serve the cause of our civil liberties.

The contemporaries of our author, those who were his companions and familiar friends, are now, for the most part, departed from this stage of human life; and by their deaths, the difficulty of access to authentic information is proportionably increased. Hence the evidences of private

history are, in the lapse of a few years, dispersed into a great variety of places, and some of them are buried beyond the reach of the most diligent inquiry.

These difficulties have been removed, in many respects, by several ready and obliging communications from some of my learned and much respected friends, and from other gentlemen, to whom I am not even personally known. But it were better to leave it untold, than to employ some pages in relating the pains and labour which have been taken in the inquiry, which was instituted with a view to the present work.

The writings of Dr. Sykes were very numerous, some of them were written on temporary occasions, and the greatest part of them were anonymous. I believe the catalogue of them, which is prefixed to this volume is complete, but this I can not absolutely affirm; though it has been twice before printed, and circulated among my friends, with a view to it's correction, and has both times benefitted by their information.

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1746. the Cathedral-Church of Winchester, on the 9th day of October, 1746. Being the day appointed for a general thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the suppression of the late unnatural Rebellion. By A. A. Sykes, D.D. Prebendary of Winchester. Published at the request of the Mayor and Corporation.

Knaptons, 4to. 6d. p. 27.

- LVI. A VINDICATION of the Account of the double
1747. Doctrine of the ancients. In Answer to a *Critical inquiry into the Practices of the ancient Philosophers*.

Knaptons, 8vo. 6d. p. 38.

- LVII. AN ESSAY on the Nature, Design, and Origin of
1748. Sacrifices.

Knaptons, 8vo. 4s. p. viii. and 354.

- LVIII. TWO QUESTIONS, previous to Dr. Middleton's
1750. Free Inquiry, impartially considered: viz. What are the grounds upon which the credibility of miracles

acles, *in general*, is founded? And, upon what grounds the miracles of the Gospel, *in particular*, are credible?—To which is added, a *Dissertation* upon Mark xvi. 17, and 18. *These signs shall follow them that believe, &c.*

Knaptons, 8vo. 2s. p. iv. and 129.

TWO QUESTIONS, previous to Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, impartially considered, &c. Part II. In which the evidence for the miracles of the primitive Church is fully examined into, and the miracles of the gospel are shewn to have sure Marks of Credibility.

LIX.

1752.

Knapton, 8vo. 2s. p. vii. and 209.

A PARAPHRASE AND NOTES upon the Epistle to the Hebrews. To which is prefixed, an Inquiry into the author of this Epistle: when it was wrote: the manner of citing the old Testament; and the method of reasoning in it: with some Remarks on the late lord Bolingbroke's treatment of St. Paul. By A. A. Sykes, D.D.

LX.

1755.

Knaptons, 4to. 6s. p. liv. and 261.

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE REDEMPTION OF MAN BY JESUS CHRIST. In two parts. In the *former* of which, the principal, if not all the texts relating to this subject are produced, and the meaning of each text, where necessary, is examined and explained. In the *latter*, the doctrine of our Redemption is set forth in xlviii. propositions. By A. A. Sykes, D.D.

LXI.

1756.

Millar, 8vo. 6s. p. vi. and 453.

A MINISTER'S

- LXII. A MINISTER'S INSTRUCTIONS to such as offer
1756. themselves to be prepared for Confirmation. In two
parts. The one *before*, the other *after*, the exami-
nation of the persons offering themselves for that
purpose.

Millar, 24°. 3d. p. 36.

- LXIII. AN INQUIRY when the resurrection of the body,
1757. or flesh, was first inserted into the public creeds.
By the *late* Arthur Ashley Sykes, D.D. Published
from the author's manuscript, by his brother
G. Sykes, A.M.

Millar, 8vo. 1s. p. vii. and 52.

M E M O I R S.

CHAPTER I.

*Mr. Sykes's birth, education, early preferments ; publications theological and political ; his writings in the Bangorian controversy ; institution to Rayleigh in Essex, and appointment to the afternoon preachingship at King - Street chapel, Westminster ; his tracts in the case of Dr. Bentley ; modest plea for the baptismal, and Scripture-notion of the Trinity ; vindication of scripture Doxologies.—
1684—1720.*

MR. ARTHUR ASHLEY SYKES was the son of Mr. Arthur Sykes, and grandson of the reverend John Sykes, who succeeded his father, the reverend Robert Sykes, in the vicarage of Ardely or Yardly in Hertfordshire 1644 ; and was in 1681, instituted to the rectory of Cottered, an adjoining parish, in the same county. ^a

B

Mr.

^a See Chauncy's *Hertfordshire*, pages 64, 69.

Mr. Arthur Sykes the elder, was the eldest surviving son of his father, and born at Yardly in September 1661; ^b but no inquiry that has been made into the family of our author has enabled me to ascertain the profession or business of his father. It is however generally agreed, that Mr. Arthur Ashley Sykes was born in London about the year 1684; ^c and it is more than probable that his father was resident and settled in that city, or it's suburbs. His elder brother, the reverend John Sykes who died 1723, was instituted to the rectory of Cottered in 1704, on the resignation of the reverend Francis Bragge, B. D. who had been presented in 1695, on the death of the grandfather John Sykes, and held the rectory in trust for John Sykes the grandson. ^d

Our

^b From the parish register.

^c See Masters's *Hist. of C. C. C. C.* 4to. 1753. p. 370; and Dr. Birch's MS. account.

^d See Chauncy's *Hertfordshire*, p. 69, a. and from the information of the Rev. Anthony Trollope, of Cottered; to whom I have been much obliged for
extracts

Our author was educated in all grammar and classic learning, at St. Paul's school in London, under the celebrated Mr. Postlethway, then master of that seminary. He was afterwards removed to Corpus Christi, or Benet college in Cambridge, for academical improvements, being admitted there April 15th, 1701, under the care of the reverend Charles Kidman, B. D. the worthy and learned tutor of the college; a gentleman who distinguished himself as the friend of liberal knowledge, and was one of the earliest, if not the first person, who introduced into the university the reading of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*.^c Mr. Sykes was appointed a scholar of the house soon after his admission; (Feb. 4, 1701-2.) and while he was an undergraduate of the college, he wrote some Hebrew verses on the death of King William, which were printed in the Cambridge collection on

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that

extracts of all the entries in the parish registers of Yardly and Cottered which concern the name of Sykes, and for some account of the family.

^c From the college register, and Masters's *Hist.* p. 327.

that occasion. He took the degree of bachelor of arts in 1704-5, and proceeded to that of master in 1708.^f

The first employment in which he engaged after he left college, was, as one of the assistants at St. Paul's school; but finding the close confinement of his new charge, inconsistent with the prosecution of his private studies, he relinquished it, and assiduously employed his time in the study of the scriptures.^g But, in after life, he was for many years one of the gentlemen before whom the youth educated at St. Paul's school passed through an annual examination. This office he performed most of the years between 1748 and 1756, as I am informed by a gentleman, who was then a scholar there;^h as he had before, in 1725, preached the sermon at the cathedral of St. Paul's on the anniversary meeting of the gentlemen educated at the school.

Mr.

^f From the college register, and Mr. Masters's MS. letter.

^g Dr. Birch's MS. account.

^h The reverend Joshua Toulmin, of Taunton.

Mr. Sykes's first ecclesiastical preferment was the vicarage of Godmersham in Kent, to which he was collated by Dr. Tennison, archbishop of Canterbury, whose mandate for induction was dated Feb. 7, 1712-13.ⁱ The archbishop had a great personal regard for Mr. Sykes;^k and, having been formerly fellow of Benet college, was not only a very considerable benefactor to that society, but a generous patron to several of its members.

In the year 1712, Dr. Thomas Brett published a sermon, with a preface to the dissenters, entitled, *The extent of Christ's commission to baptize*; professing to "shew the capacity of infants to receive, and the utter incapacity of our dissenting teachers to administer christian baptism." The doctor's foundation for this doctrine rested upon the incapacity of laymen to administer either of the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ; and that whoever

B 3

is

ⁱ Letter from Edward Hasted, esq. author of the *History of Kent*.

^k Dr. Birch's MS. account.

is not episcopally ordained is no more than a mere layman.¹ Dr. Brett's creed seems to have extended to the approbation of all the outworks of the established system, unqualified by any liberal or rational interpretation or abatement. Mr. Sykes undertook the task of examining into the last of these questions, in (I.) *An answer to that part of Dr. Brett's sermon which relates to the incapacity of persons not episcopally ordained to administer christian baptism.* (1712.) And he seems to have taken this notice of Dr. Brett's sermon, not so much on account of its real importance, as because the doctrines which it contained were then much insisted upon by some others of the clergy, and had been warmly advanced in other pulpits, besides his own.

Of the dissenters, our author says,
 “ We have hitherto believed, the dif-
 “ ferences between us and them to have
 “ been about ceremonies, and not about
 “ the first principles of christianity : but
 “ now those men who have justly de-
 “ served

¹ See his *Preface*, p. vii,

“ served the commendations they have
 “ received from all the divines of our
 “ church, are proved by *our new dis-*
 “ *coveries*, not to have so much as
 “ understood the great and substantial
 “ difference between us. For no one can
 “ believe, that they would have insisted
 “ on the comparatively trifling circum-
 “ stances, the kneeling at the commu-
 “ nion, the wearing a surplice, the cross
 “ in baptism, &c. and have omitted the
 “ more material question, whether they
 “ were christians or not.”

Thus much applies only to the reproach
 which is conveyed, in the supposed in-
 efficacy of the ministrations of the dis-
 senting clergy. But it is a no less just
 than generous testimony of the obligation
 which christianity has to dissenters in
 general, equally with the members of the
 established church. The principles of
 their dissent had respect, primarily, more
 to the authority which imposed, than to
 the things which were enjoined; and
 those who are now generally deno-
 minated “ rational dissenters,” are al-
 most universally considered as having add-

ed to such their former principles, the most important truth in the christian scriptures, the *proper unity of God*, clear of all the scholastic or metaphysical distinctions, which continue to be retained in the established system, and to be professed by some of it's members.

But to return; Dr. Brett having insisted, in his preface, that the invalidity of baptism performed by persons not episcopally ordained, is the doctrine of the twenty-third article of the church; Mr. Sykes has attended to the dislodgment of even this plea, though it in nowise affects the truth or falsehood of the doctrine. But, the consideration that the church of England, requires of protestant dissenting clergy, their re-ordination by bishops, which she does not require of the popish clergy, should seem to have reference to the insufficiency as well as the irregularity of their ministrations.

Dr. Brett's argument from his text, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, &c.* is shewn to be too limited; and it is certain the true sense of this passage is of much
more

more extensive import. His three following arguments are separately stated and considered, as well in their consequences as their premises.

Mr. Sykes admits the expediency, and that the rules of scripture reach a regulated, and even an episcopal ministry; but denies that the want of these circumstances affect the validity of the ordinances or offices performed by others.

In the conclusion he adds, “ I am
 “ not insensible of what loads of cla-
 “ mour and perhaps calumny and con-
 “ tempt will be laid upon me, as pre-
 “ suming to defend this opinion. But I
 “ hope I have kept the rules of justice
 “ to you, and of truth sacred and invio-
 “ lated; I am sure I have those of
 “ honesty, neither concealing any argu-
 “ ment or circumstance that has any
 “ strength in it, to my knowledge, nor
 “ offering any thing but what I believe to
 “ be true. The subject in hand is so ma-
 “ terial, and so wide is the difference be-
 “ tween us, that I conjure you to shew me
 “ my errors, if I am in any, in the spirit of
 “ christianity; and to believe me as ready
 “ to

“ to retract them, as I am to defend the
 “ truth, whenever or wheresoever it appears
 “ to me.”

How far this particular invitation was attended to by Dr. Brett I am not well informed. I think he wrote more upon the same subject ; but Mr. Sykes was not concerned in it. And indeed it is a matter of no consequence, since the sentiments of individuals are now very generally agreed on this head, though those institutions which must regulate the conduct of some of them remain unaltered.

On the 12th of April 1714, Mr. Sykes was instituted to the rectory of Dry-Drayton in Cambridgeshire, on the presentation of the duchess dowager of Bedford ;^m and in August following, he resigned his vicarage of Godmersham in Kent.ⁿ

The next year Mr. Sykes maintained the *Innocency of Error*. He was then in the thirty-first year of his age ; and
 having

^m Mr. Masters's MS. letter.

ⁿ Letter from Mr. Haisted.

having diligently studied the scriptures, ecclesiastical history, and all useful knowledge, which applied to the forming just conceptions of the word and will of God, and of the invaluable and unalienable rights of men and christians, there are no marks of a premature blossom unseasonably put forth, and likely to be blighted, ere it was set to bear fruit. But, on the contrary, we read a work which would have reflected honour on great abilities and learning, well corrected and digested by matured age.

The subject of this publication was happily chosen, and the tract forms an excellent vindication of it's author, and of the liberty he took in all his future writings; affording at the same time incontestible proof that he had fully satisfied himself of the duty of inquiry, in it's fullest extent, and in all it's consequences, before he proceeded in the defence or attack of particular doctrines or opinions.

The tract here spoken of, is entitled (II.) *The Innocency of Error asserted and vindicated*. In a letter to *****; and was published 1715. The occasion which is said to have given rise to this piece, was
his

his having asserted and vindicated this position, viz. “ that no heresy is so destructive of religion as a wicked life ; no schism so damnable as a course of sin.”^o The object of

^o There should seem to be as little real novelty as real heresy, in this observation. So long ago, as early in the reign of Henry viii. Dr. John Collet, dean of St. Paul’s, and founder of that very school which first gave learning to our author, observed the same in *A sermon made to the convocation at St. Paul’s church ; A.D. 1511.* “ We are also now-a-days troubled with heretics,” said he, “ (men intoxicated with strange opinions,) but “ the heresies of them are not so pestilent and pernicious to us and the people, as the naughty lives of “ priests, which (if we believe St. Bernard) is a kind “ of heresy, nay the chief of all, and most perilous—— “ which holy father sheweth plainly, that there be two “ kinds of heresies ; one arising from perverse teaching, “ and the other from a naughty life ; of which two this “ latter is far worse and more perilous, reigning (now) “ in priests, who do not live like themselves, not “ priestly, but secularly, to the utter and miserable “ destruction of the church of God.” See *the Phœnix*, vol. ii. p. 7. And more lately we find archbishop Wake, when engaged in his defence against the exceptions of Monsieur de Meaux, exhorting us “ to be “ careful to search out, and ready to embrace the “ truth, wherever we find it. So shall our *lives* be orthodox, though perhaps our *faith* should not ; and if “ in

of the writer is to defend that position, and
 “ to shew, beyond dispute, that no errors,
 if involuntary, are or can be punishable.”

The first argument adduced, is, that “ in
 all perceptions the mind is passive ; and
 the perceptions of things being in number-
 less instances quite different from what
 things are really in themselves, unless we
 are capable of bringing together and com-
 paring a great many intermediate ideas to
 rectify these mistakes, we must necessarily
 fall into abundance of errors.” Secondly,
 that “ error always consisting in a mistake
 of the judgment, it must be in it's own na-
 ture involuntary : and if involuntary error
 be punishable, then wherever there is error
 there is guilt, and consequently all men
 must be guilty before God on that ac-
 count.” Thirdly, that, “ if involuntary
 error be punishable by God ; then 'tis the
 greatest cruelty, injustice, and tyranny ima-
 ginable in him to make such creatures as
 cannot but err in many cases, and yet to pu-
 nish

“ in any thing we do err, (for we pretend not to infal-
 “ libility, nor is it therefore impossible for us to be
 “ mistaken,) yet at least we shall not be heretics.”

Cited in *Candid Disquisitions*, 2d edit. p. 100, note (o).

nish them for erring." Fourthly, "if involuntary errors are punishable by God, 'tis not a few that are called heretics ; nor a few dissenters in a nation, no, nor ten thousand times ten thousand, that must perish everlastingly ; but the flames of hell will reach to almost, if not quite, to all the christian world." Fifthly, "because we cannot repent of such error, since we believe it to be true. Error being a mistake of the judgment, it must direct and guide our actions as much as truth itself." And he further maintains, that "those errors must not *always* be reckoned voluntary which arise from the common springs of error, viz. authority, preconceived hypotheses, or even predominant passions ; much less are those to be reckoned guilty of voluntary errors, who want either abilities or opportunities to search the truth."

The objections to these arguments and positions are then fully and forcibly stated, and satisfactorily removed. And the positive duty of making free inquiry, and following the dictates of conscience, in every supposable case, even though the party is thereby involved in error, should seem to be

be demonstrated ; but not without using all necessary precaution against misapprehension of the meaning of the writer.

The catholic spirit of the arguments brought in support of the *innocency of error* ; and the just and close reasoning shewn in the use of them, were not likely, at that time, to exempt the book or the writer from the notice or censure of certain persons who were neither unwatchful, nor inactive. It was soon followed by some anonymous *Remarks*, which were very generally ascribed to Mr. Thomas Sherwell, formerly fellow of Christ's college in Cambridge. ^p The whole of Mr. Sykes's tract being disposed of, ^q he published a second edition, the same year, *with a Preface in answer to the Remarks* ; which led the remarker to proceed to his *Defence*. ^r

Five years afterwards (1720.) Dr. Potter, then bishop of Oxford, published *A charge to the clergy of his diocese, at his triennial visitation, in July 1719.* This was

^p From the information of Dr. Flexman.

^q See *Preface* to second edition.

^r See *Preface* to third edition.

was designed to demonstrate the insufficiency of Mr. Sykes's doctrine of the innocency of error, and also to reprove the general conduct of those who assumed such a latitude in the interpretation of their assent to the thirty-nine articles of the established church, as virtually destroyed that uniformity which it was the design of the legislature to secure in the requisition of subscription. These parts of the charge were directed *ad homines*; and it may be presumed that bishop Hoadly, Mr. Sykes, and others who fought on the same side in the Bangorian controversy, were not out of the sight of the bishop of Oxford, when he was writing his charge.

The publication of this piece drew upon the writer, the just and masterly reprehension of the bishop of Bangor, in a large *Postscript*, to his *Answer to Dr. Hare's sermon on church authority, occasioned by the bishop of Oxford's late charge to his clergy*. (1720.) While bishop Hoadly was writing upon the subject of church authority, in answer to Dr. Hare, it was impossible to overlook either so able an advocate, or one
who

who had so lately stood forward in the same cause, as bishop Potter.

The bishop of Oxford now followed his charge with a *defence* of it, against the bishop of Bangor; and having occasion to descend to particulars, and produce his best evidence of those sad grievances, of which he had complained in his charge, proceeds in proof thereof expressly to name our author's tract, on *the innocency of error*, and to own that he had it in his thoughts when he "collected
"the heads of matter laid before his
"clergy at his visitation."^s

Mr. Sykes being equally concerned, with bishop Hoadly, in the argument, and now become no less pointed out by bishop Potter, he came forward also, in support of himself, and his right reverend friend and ally, in (XX.) *A Vindication of the innocency of error from the misrepresentations of the lord bishop of Oxford, in his late charge, and the defence of it. In a letter to his lordship. (1720.)*

C

The

^s See the bishop of Oxford's *Defence of the late charge, &c.* p. 18.

The bishop had represented the tract in question as containing “ pernicious doctrine,” and as one of those books “ which all good men wish to have buried in perpetual oblivion ;” and classed the author among those “ who seemed to undermine the great truths of religion.”[†] Mr. Sykes published his name in the title page of this *Vindication*, and subscribed it at the end ; and also avowed himself to be the author of the book referred to by the bishop. It is therefore difficult to assign the reason why he did not give his name along with the subsequent editions of the original tract, as he left no one to seek from what quarter it came.

In the piece now before us he has, I think, given a just and satisfactory vindication of himself, but it is needless to repeat, and difficult to abridge it. Nevertheless, he observes, “ I am sensible how hard a thing it is to be free from mistakes ; but I do not think it an hard thing to acknowledge them, and to amend.”[“] And accordingly he owns the inaccuracy of
of

[†] See the bishop's *Defence*, pages 18, 21.

[“] See *Vindication*, p. 37.

of one expression in the *Innocency of Error*, and that it was neither so clear, nor expressive of his mind as he could wish; and he afterwards corrected it. But neither this, nor any other terms in which he expressed himself, afforded room for any misapprehension, but from a very willing adversary. The declaration which he makes of his design in the original work is manly, and very descriptive of it's obvious purport and effect.—“ The design of
 “ that book,” says he, “ was to teach
 “ people to hold the unity of the spirit
 “ in the bond of peace, not in the bonds
 “ of hatred and enmity, of persecutions
 “ and cruelty. ’Twas to make love and
 “ charity abound, by shewing the mer-
 “ ciful and kind disposition of God to
 “ his creatures. ’Twas to secure the or-
 “ thodox from any absurd attempts of
 “ erroneous persons, as much as to se-
 “ cure those that may be reputed guilty
 “ of errors, from any violence from the
 “ orthodox. The world had long been
 “ acquainted with the utmost rigour of
 “ severity used by those who, in their
 “ turns, had been fined, and banished,

“ and imprisoned ; and every party of
 “ christians when *undermost*, has always
 “ complained of the cruelty and injustice
 “ of their adversaries. To strike at the
 “ root of this evil, which has been uni-
 “ versally condemned ; and to encourage
 “ truth, and honesty, and industrious
 “ search, was my design.” ^w

After the disputants on both sides had ceased for several years to debate the particular positions and arguments first advanced, Dr. Sykes, in 1729, published a *third edition, very much corrected, and improved by the author*. And in 1742, a *fourth* edition. The tract in this, it's present state, is a truly valuable and important one. Infomuch that another edition has been printed at Aberdeen, by the late professor David Fordyce, of that university. ^x

The general political state of this kingdom for some time after the accession of the house of Hanover to the throne of Great Britain, may readily account for the

^w See *Vindication*, pages 29, 30.

^x From the information of Dr. Flexman.

the occasional exercise of our author's pen, in favour of the civil liberties of his country. The introduction of a new family, while there were claimants from the male line of the secluded prince, would, of course, deeply affect the personal interests of many, and agitate the passions of all. Both parties were violent in the several modes of attack and defence. The tories were not disinclined to sacrifice the religion, and liberties of the people, to their high ideas of uninterrupted succession, and to their infatuated attachment to the person of their prince. While the whigs, in the heat of their defence, were not uniformly governed by the genuine principles of our free constitution, but accommodated their measures too much to present and temporary expediency. The cry of, *the danger of the church*, had been the popular watch-word during part of Queen Anne's reign, and it revived, or rather continued, after the accession of king George the first, and was, what Mr. Sykes then called it, "a fore-
" scarce yet skin'd over."

To counteract the effect of this rage among the tories, and jacobites, Mr. Sykes published, in 1715, the tract entitled (III.) *The safety of the church under the present ministry, considered. In a letter to ——. By a clergyman.* A second edition followed at the close of the same year, or early in 1716. The arguments however are all of a temporary nature, and apply only to the tories as such, in the way of retort. He has not taken the better, and more honourable and justifiable ground, that not only the safety, but the advancement and prosperity of the church of England, would be best secured by the enlargement of her terms of admission, and by reducing her formularies, both of subscription and public worship, nearer to the standard of the scriptures; by allowing to dissenters of every denomination the enjoyment of an unlimited toleration, and erasing from the statute book every species of a religious test for admission to civil offices, and every penal law which can, by any construction, be extended to affect religious opinions. This tract, like one or two others, appears to have

have been written *ex parte*, on the spur of the occasion ; and under some of those prejudices, to which we are all liable, and under which we may all, insensibly, have acted at some one part or other of our lives. It tends therefore only to prove that the church, understanding by that expression the whole ecclesiastical establishment of this country, was as likely to continue in it's then present state, under the fostering care and protection of king George the first, the dukes of Marlborough and Devonshire, the earl of Nottingham, lords Townshend and Cowper, and the whole of the whig ministry, as when under the government of queen Anne, the duke of Ormond, the earl of Oxford, and lords Bolinbroke and Harcourt.

The next tract, in the order of time, was of more general importance ; and, with some little exceptions, is excellent and unanswerable. Some considerable theological questions, and also others respecting the extent of christian liberty, were at this time debated with much warmth, and occupied a good deal of the attention

tion of the public. Mr. Sykes therefore judged it advisable to endeavour to qualify the temper of the disputants, and their several partizans, by maintaining, that (IV.) *The external peace of the church, was only attainable by a zeal for scripture in it's just latitude, and by mutual charity ; not by a pretence of uniformity of opinion.* This he did in the tract bearing this title, and published in 1716, under the character of *A lover of truth and peace.* In this work the inexpediency and impiety of establishing an uniformity of opinion, and also the impossibility of effecting it, as we are “ men, and christians,” and protestants, are demonstrated from experience, reason, and scripture, beyond the possibility of being refuted : and the tract is most deservedly, so far, held in high esteem. But, there is one argument which had better have been spared, and might now well be obliterated ; when the writer undertakes, in the compass of a page and a half,^y to maintain seriously that a latitude of opinion is

^y See p. 45—47 ; and also at the end, p. 58—61.

is intended and allowed by the legislature to subscribers, as they are “ members of the church of England.” We may observe, I am sure I remember to have felt, where the shoe pinched; we may mark the subtilty of the disputant, but read without that satisfaction which follows the convictions of plain and unequivocal reasoning. The avowed object of the subscription required, is to prevent diversity of opinions. We daily see the insufficiency of this project for the purpose for which it is said to be practised. And we all know that uniformity of opinion cannot be obtained by compulsion, or at the requisition of any earthly power. But it is most obvious to see that the *design* of the legislature is otherwise. It is very true, that a great variety and diversity of opinions are tolerated and connived at by our governors in church and state, but such toleration or connivance are not supported or countenanced in the acts or constitutions of either. And it is no small disgrace to our nation, which professes and boasts to be a land of liberty, and protestantism, that the free profession of the gospel

is

is not secured by the express declaration and authority of our municipal laws.

It was not likely that any thing that had been said upon this subject, by a writer of our author's acknowledged abilities and character, should escape the notice of the penetrating and learned author of *The Confessional*. He has accordingly remarked on Mr. Sykes's argument in favour of a latitude in subscribing to the articles and liturgy of the church of England; and his remarks deservedly merit our particular observation, and seem, with the rest of the matter in the same chapter, to be decisive against it.

“ There is another writer,” says he,
 “ who must not be wholly passed by, as
 “ he hath been at the pains to sum up
 “ the whole merits of this case in a few
 “ words.

“ If, says he, we consider ourselves as
 “ members of the church of England, we
 “ are not obliged to an uniformity of
 “ opinion.

“ In other words, the church of Eng-
 “ land, as such, hath no uniform doctrine;
 “ which, whatever the matter of fact
 “ may

“ may be, the church, I apprehend, will
 “ not take for a compliment. But this
 “ idle notion being built entirely on *his*
 “ *majesty's declaration*, falls to the ground
 “ along with that. He goes on: *If the*
 “ *legislature do not think fit to determine in*
 “ *what particular sense the subscriber shall*
 “ *give his assent, it is very possible and*
 “ *well known, that persons of quite oppo-*
 “ *site opinions may and do subscribe.*”

“ Hath the legislature then determined,
 “ that men may subscribe the articles in
 “ opposite senses? No. If not, then,
 “ hath the legislature determined any
 “ thing about articles and subscriptions?
 “ Yes, it hath determined that the arti-
 “ cles shall be subscribed, for the pur-
 “ pose of avoiding diversities of opinions.
 “ The legislature then hath determined,
 “ that the articles shall be subscribed
 “ only in *one* sense respectively; and that
 “ is, in the most obvious sense of each
 “ article.

“ *The sense, saith this author, which*
 “ *such as require subscriptions accept and*
 “ *tolerate, is to be the rule of subscrip-*
 “ *tion.*

“ This

“ This matter is put in a wrong light.
 “ It is the law, and the law only, which
 “ *requireth* subscription; and *requireth*
 “ that it should be made before the ordi-
 “ nary, that is, in the presence of the
 “ person who institutes. The ordinary
 “ is not bound to offer the articles to
 “ be subscribed; but the clerk himself
 “ is bound to offer to subscribe them;
 “ and he must subscribe without any re-
 “ serve, exception, or qualification.

“ The *canonical* subscription is indeed
 “ another affair, of which there is no
 “ present occasion to say any thing, as
 “ the question *here* is only concerning
 “ subscription as enjoined by the legisla-
 “ ture. And enough has been said of
 “ this, to refute our author’s fancy about
 “ *accepting* and *tolerating* senses.

“ The author concludes thus; *since*
 “ *the church therefore* accepts and to-
 “ *lerates contrary opinions, ’tis plain the*
 “ *church does not conceive identity of opi-*
 “ *nion necessary to her tranquility.*

“ The church, as we have seen, *accepts*
 “ and *tolerates* nothing, but what the law
 “ allows her to *accept* and *tolerate*: which
 “ is

“ is just the reverse of *contrary opinions*.
 “ The notion indeed is absurd, even so far as
 “ there is any colour to apply it to the
 “ church. If the church *accepts* and *tole-*
 “ *rates*, she likewise *espouses* and *maintains*,
 “ contrary opinions. For the persons,
 “ whose contrary opinions she *accepts* and
 “ *tolerates*, do, by this very act of subscrip-
 “ tion, become part of the body of the
 “ church herself, and most commonly are
 “ the very mouth of the church ; and retail
 “ their *contrary opinions* to the public, by
 “ the very authority which the church gives
 “ them. Is not this to lift the church off
 “ her ancient foundations ? or, rather is it
 “ not to own the justice of that reproach,
 “ *that the church of England, properly so*
 “ *called, is not now existing.*”²

Very soon after the publication of the
 last tract, thus ably remarked upon by the
 author of the *Confessional*, Mr. Sykes en-
 gaged in a great political question. And
 though I have no suspicion of his having
 been led to it by any unworthy motives, he
 will

² See *The Confessional*, third edition, chap. vi.
 p. 241—244.

will be generally thought, and I am happy to observe it, to have defended a measure which is now justly reprobated by a very great majority of the people. The septennial bill was supported by many well principled men, who were friends to the equal rights of mankind ; but to avoid the hazard of a general election, at a time critical to the reigning family, and to the whig ministry, they introduced and supported this hateful and unconstitutional infringement of the rights of representation, and of the essential principles of liberty. The spirit and tendency of this act had indeed been before countenanced, by the same description of men, in the establishment of triennial parliaments : and they now made a second precedent for any subversion of the most sacred rights of Britons, by any administration whose principles should induce them to propose, and whose numbers, in the habits of compliances, would support measures most hostile to the true interests of the people.

The work of our author upon this subject, is entitled, (V.) *The suspension of the triennial*

*triennial bill, the properest means to unite the nation. In a letter to ***** ; and it passed through a second edition in the year of it's first publication, 1716. Mr. Sykes acknowledges that " himself had then lately been uneasy at the design of altering the triennial bill, but that after balancing the conveniencies and inconveniencies on each side the question, he was become the advocate of that design."*^a And indeed it is very apparent that the supposed necessity of the case was the occasion of his change of opinion, and not the consequence of his examination into the nature of representation, and the tenure of parliament. For none of those many irrefragable arguments which have lately been advanced with every advantage, by patriots in our own time, in favour of equal representation, and shortening the duration of parliaments, are brought forward ; nor are any others made use of but such as applied to the apprehensions of government from the opposition of the tories and jacobites, while they were heated with party disputes, unsettled after rebellion, and assisted by supplies of money from France. These

^a See pages 1, 2.

These circumstances would probably have had great effect in the choice of a new parliament; but something should be hazarded by all good and consistent governments, rather than subvert the first and essential principles of civil liberty. Without this justice being done to the inseparable rights, and legitimate demands of the people, political governors will ever be inclined to continue or impose a certain yoke upon the subject, to avoid only a possible derangement of their own power. Mr. Sykes speaks indeed of only a *sexennial* parliament, but the same arguments, which go upon the principle of temporary expediency, will give an indefinite longevity to parliaments; and, in the end, render them the ductile and subservient instruments of every species of tyranny and oppression, under the name and garb of law.

But, admitting the truth of the necessity which was pleaded, and the policy of the expedient which was tried, the occasion of the repeal of the triennial bill was temporary, and all the arguments which were used, as well within doors as without, were temporary; therefore, to say the most, a
temporary

temporary suspension is all that either the occasion, or the arguments will go to justify or excuse. And consequently, the continuance of the septennial act, founded in a timid, an interested, and even a fatal innovation, must be supported by different arguments than those which gave it birth.

The same general state of politics gave rise, in the same year, to another political tract by our author. In 1715, Mr. William Paul, a non-juring clergyman, but who retained his living of Orton or Ottern in Leicestershire, quitting his ministerial engagement to his parish, entered into the rebellion of that year. He was at the battle of Preston, but behaved with a pusillanimity unfitting a desperate adventurer. He was taken; and upon his trial pleaded guilty; was condemned, and executed at Tyburn July 13, 1716. Immediately after his execution, his letters, written, after his condemnation, to the archbishop of Canterbury and lord Townshend, and his petition to the king, which were abject in the extreme, and affected much penitence,

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were

were published; to these was added his speech at Tyburn, which was a contradiction to all the preceding papers, and was calculated to inflame and mislead the people, by abusing those very persons from whom he had a few days before sued for his life, with every solemn profession of contrition and loyalty.^b This speech was written by Mr. Howell;^c and indeed Mr. Paul appears to have been unequal to it, in personal courage, and the enthusiasm of the party, though he suffered it to pass under the sanction of his name.

Within ten days after these papers concerning Mr. Paul and his politics had been published, Mr. Sykes remarked upon them

^b See *The case of William Paul, a clergyman.* 8vo. 1716.

^c See Mr. Sykes's *Answer to the non-jurors*, p. 7. The same Mr. Howell was author of *The case of schism in the church of England*; which was the subject of a legal prosecution against Mr. Redmayne, the printer, in 1717, who was sentenced to pay a fine of 500l. to remain a prisoner five years, and to find securities for his good behaviour during life. See Salmon's *Chronological Historian*, p. 395, as cited by Dr. Towers, in his late judicious, and very seasonable *Observations on the rights and duties of juries in trials for libels.* 1784.

them in a small tract, called, (VI.) *The thanks of an honest clergyman for Mr. Paul's speech at Tyburne*; which presently passed through four editions. In this piece he has well exposed the baseness of the man, and the danger of his principles to the civil and religious liberties of a free protestant country. And it is very probable, that so seasonable an address to the people, rendered no small service to the government, by the display of the principles of non-jurors, and the natural consequences of them to the constitution of Great-Britain; as also by satisfying the people of the justice of the sentence which was left to be executed on the criminal.

Mr. Sykes's next tract, entitled (VII.) *An answer to the non-jurors charge of schism upon the church of England*, was published the same year with the preceding one, (1716.) and said, in the title page, to be *written by a clergyman of the church of England*. "The seizure of Dr. Geo. Hicks's papers, immediately after the failure of a rebellion raised by the joint forces of papists, non-jurors, and dissatisfied church-of-England-

England-men, who had sworn allegiance to the government, occasioned much disquisition into the nature and tendency of them. The rebellion not being entirely quelled, and the passions of the people still very much inflamed, the designed dispersion of those papers of Dr. Hicks's, (wherein the church of England was charged with heresy, schism, perjury, and treason,) could be with this only view, to inflame the people further, to rekindle the expiring rebellion, and to overturn both the state and church. Several pamphlets were published upon this occasion, and among these, some by Dr. Thomas Bennet, and Dr. White Kennet, afterwards bishop of Peterborough. Dr. Bennet, and also the anonymous writer, (thought to be *a very great hand*,) of *A vindication of the realm and church of England*, were severally answered. But the first piece that was wrote by way of just answer, which gave satisfaction to government, says Mr. Hearne, was, *An answer to the non-jurors charge of schism upon the church of England*, without any name, but generally ascribed to Mr. Sykes." ^d

It

^d See Mr. Hearne's *Account of the Bangorian controversy*, in the second vol. of bishop Hoadly's works, pages 381, 382.

It is, indeed, observed in the preface to this *Answer*, that Dr. Bennet had in his late tracts, granted the non-jurors “their principles, and bid them heartily “welcome to all the advantages they could “draw from them :” whereas the answerer professed to examine the principles themselves, as being certain that if the *principles* are false, the *conclusion* cannot be true.

The motive which led to the writing, and publishing this *answer* to the non-jurors, is declared to be a defence of the friends of the revolution, and the protestant succession, against the bitter reflections made upon them.

The principles of the non-jurors are taken from Howell’s *Case of schism in the church of England, truly stated*, and are these ;

I. That the subjects of England could not transfer their allegiance from king James II. and thence it is concluded, that all who resisted king James, or have since complied with such as did, are excommunicated by the second canon.

II. That the catholic bishops cannot be deprived by a lay-power only : thence

it is inferred, that all who have joined with them that were put into the places of the deprived bishops, are schismatics.

In opposition to these principles, and their inferences, the *Answerer* proves,

I. That it is lawful, *i. e.* not inconsistent with any duty to God, to resist a prince who subverts our constitution, and destroys our liberties and laws.

II. That the civil magistrate has authority to deprive a catholic bishop. And the following arguments are adduced in proof.

1. The end of government is always the public good, the happiness of the people. From which principle it plainly follows, that every government that is inconsistent with the end of entering into society, may be lawfully struck off.

2. Absolute arbitrary government is inconsistent with the end of mens entering into society.

3. All government is a trust, and the person entrusted, if he acts directly contrary to the trust reposed in him, acts

acts without authority, and therefore may be resisted.

4. Let the origin of government be what you please; nay, suppose that God immediately from heaven nominates the person who shall govern; yet the *end* of government being always the same, viz. the public good; if the prince so nominated should commence brute, or fall mad afterwards, and frantically give into all oppressive schemes, and plunder and depopulate his country, no man can think his commission would justify such proceedings, or make it unlawful to restrain him from such exorbitances.

5. To deny the lawfulness of resistance to princes, or withdrawing allegiance from such as act against the happiness of the public, is to condemn, not the revolution only, but the conduct and practice of this nation ever since the church was reformed.

He then severally answers the objections against the lawfulness of resistance

as they are affected to be supported by reason and revelation ; such as, (1.) That the government of the worst of princes is better, *i. e.* more for the public happiness, than resistance can be ; (2.) that the doctrine of the lawfulness of resistance tends to encourage rebellions and public disturbances ; (3.) that kings are supreme, and therefore irresistible. And of course he is led to explain such passages in the scriptures, as are generally pressed into the service of tyranny by the advocates for despotism ; and this he has done in a manner, which reflects credit upon him as a christian divine, and a friend of rational and scriptural liberty. ^c

The

^c The particular passages of the scriptures which are here explained by Mr. Sykes, are the following.

Proverbs viii. 15, 16. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule. p. 23.

Matthew v. 29. I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, *i. e.* an evil person, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.—Luke vi. 27. Love your enemies, &c. and Rom. xii. 17. Recompence to no man evil for evil. p. 24.

John xix. 11. Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. p. 22.

Rom.

The *Answerer* next proceeds to consider the second part of the non-jurors principles, (before stated,) *that catholic bishops cannot be deprived by a lay-power only*; which position is examined and refuted in a chain of arguments under various divisions and subdivisions. And the tract is finally closed with replies to the following objections. (1.) That, if the civil magistrate may deprive a bishop at his pleasure, he might put in others of his own stamp. Which would (2.) be depriving the church of a power which all other societies have, viz; to own no head but of their own chusing. (3.) That the civil government cannot take away what it never gave.

Early

Rom. xiii. 1, 2. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,—Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. p. 16.

1 Peter ii. 13, 14, 18. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governours, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.—Servants be subject to your masters in all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. p. 20.

Early in the following year (1717.) Dr. Hoadly, then bishop of Bangor, preached before the king his celebrated sermon, on *The nature of the kingdom, or church of Christ*; which was no sooner published than it was followed by an almost innumerable succession of other sermons, charges, letters, and essays upon the same subject; wherein the several writers supported their various notions of the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and the extent of church government. Among these Mr. Sykes frequently figured, as we shall have occasion to observe, on the same side of the question with the bishop of Bangor, against Dr. Sherlock; while the bishop was engaged against doctors Hare, Snape, and an host of adversaries who composed the center and rear ranks of the confederate army.

A few months before bishop Hoadly had preached this sermon, Mr. Sykes, upon occasion of the archdeacon of Ely's visitation at Cambridge, and while he was rector of Dry-Drayton in that neighbourhood, preached a sermon upon the same subject,

subject, in the church of St. Michael, Cambridge, on December 13, 1716, and which he published soon after under the title of (VIII.) *The difference between the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of this world.* (1717.)

It will be sufficient to make some note of the doctrine advanced in this visitation sermon, without entering further at present into the debates then carried on upon the subject. When our Saviour was before Pilate, in answer to the question put by the Roman governor, *Art thou the king of the Jews?*—he replied, in the words of the text, MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD. (John xviii. 36.) “This was owning himself a king,” says Mr. Sykes, “but declaring the kingdom “which he came to erect, not to be “like the kingdoms of this world, sub- “ject to ruin; not incompatible with “earthly kingdoms, or with the interests “and politics of princes; not to be “governed by the ways and means that “earthly kingdoms are; nor did it re- “quire a conduct and management in its “subjects like to what establishes the “kingdoms of this world.”

The

The peculiar tendency of some doctrines then lately advanced, and by some too greedily imbibed, would justify him, as he observes, in endeavouring to shew, (1.) What is the nature of Christ's kingdom. (2.) How it differs necessarily from the kingdoms of this world.

With respect to the nature of Christ's kingdom; 'tis a kingdom erected here for the salvation of all such as have faith in Christ, and live according to the laws of the gospel. 'Tis a kingdom which may be justly compared to *treasure hid in a field*; (Mat. xiii. 44) 'tis a kingdom erected within the souls of men; 'tis internal and spiritual; 'tis, in a word, a kingdom erected on purpose to *destroy him who has the power of death*, (Heb. ii. 14.) to root out sin and vice, and to implant in us the truest principles of goodness, and all sorts of virtues. He considers the words *church*, or *church of Christ*, as comprehending the visible professors of christianity, and then the kingdom of Christ is "a society of men joined together by the alone laws of Christ." The end and design of them is to promote virtue and goodness, to worship God publicly, to pro-
fess

ness themselves to all mankind not ashamed of the cross of Christ, and to endeavour by these means to confirm each other in their religion ; and, by the exemplariness of their conduct, and decency of behaviour, to win over others to a love of Christ, and to save their souls.

And in shewing *how it differs necessarily from the kingdoms of this world*, he observes ; (1.) That a coercive power or force is put into the hands of the civil magistrate ; but force is absolutely forbid in the kingdom of Christ ; and teaching and persuasion are the only means to propagate his cause in the world. (2.) That known judges, vested with power, are necessary to the peace, order, and preservation of states ; but in the kingdom of Christ no men have an absolute power of determining controversies, nor is such necessary to the peace of society. (3.) That the laws of Christ are fixed, insomuch that no one should presume to preach any other gospel than what is already preached ; whereas the laws of the kingdoms of this world, are all liable to change, are necessarily altered, or repealed. (4.) That in the kingdoms of
this

this world, when one governor dies, another succeeds ; but strictly speaking, Christ can have no successor in the government of the church. (5.) That fire and sword, and the calamities of war, &c. may destroy temporal kingdoms ; but the kingdom of Christ is out of the power of wicked men to subvert. (5.) That the kingdom of Christ is very compatible with the civil interests of mankind, though distinct from them.

These questions being thus investigated, and these positions being proved, he concludes with considering the proper uses to be made of, or conclusions to be drawn from the whole. Of which the first is ; that no one particular form of the external regimen of the church is so essential to christianity, but that it may subsist without it. He then pronounces upon the absurdity of those tenets, in the non-jurors schemes, concerning church affairs ; and that all arguments drawn from the nature of other societies, to that of the kingdom of Christ, are inconclusive ; and earnestly exhorts his hearers to a gospel-unity.

In the same year with the publication of the sermon before-mentioned, (1717,) a scheme of raising money, by taxing or lowering the interest of the funds, called our author's attention once more to a question merely political; for, like a sentinel accoutered, he was ever ready, besides pursuing the cool and dispassionate investigation of truth, to step forward as the exigencies of the times seemed to require. The tract which he published on this occasion is entitled, (IX.) *A letter to a friend. In which is shewn the inviolable nature of public securities. By a lover of his country.* And the reasoning and arguments which are founded upon, and drawn from the necessary faithfulness in contracts, public and private, and from the consequences of any breach of faith, which induces suspicion or distrust of credit, are unanswerable, by any consideration of right, or expediency. And the truth of these arguments has received a melancholy confirmation in our subsequent conduct. It would have been well if they had not been superseded by the plea of necessity, and slighted by the possessors of power; by those who, at the same time they

pre-

presumed to judge of the fitness of the measure, applied their force to effect it. Happy would it have been if public securities had been preserved inviolate ; or that no occasion had been given for the rumour that the public faith has been pledged, and has been repeatedly broken. Without entering into the number or magnitude of the several necessities which have been pleaded, or the iniquities which have from time to time occasioned the public distresses, the consequence is obvious ; that without exertions almost exceeding the ability of the people to bear, together with the perseverance of ministers, in more public virtue than is usually found in political cabinets, the dignity and sacredness of public credit will vanish, and return no more. In the convulsion of a national bankruptcy, every species of property would sensibly feel the effect of our lavish and unprincipled expenditures. And it would be well, if along with the loss of property, we should not have to mourn the loss of kindred blood ; and probably, the final departure of the liberties of Britain, in which consist our rational happiness, and the enjoyment of every

every

every other blessing under heaven. The warning voice is gone forth, and the only road to our political salvation has been pointed out by the hand of a master, of one who is no less excellent and worthy in the estimation of his friends, than wise and faithful, in the best interests of his country, and of mankind.^f

But, from matters simply of political consideration, and particularly from the nature of public credit, and the science of finance, we will return again to review the nature and force of arguments which equally affect the principles of our religion, as well as those of civil government. And it may be somewhat more agreeable to the reader to be introduced to the change or resumption of the subject, by a short statement of of some preceding facts.

An argument made use of by the bishop of Bangor, in his famous *Preservative against the principles and practices of the non-jurors*, (1716.) in order to justify deprivations by the civil magistrate, was charged

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^f See the political writings of the reverend Dr. Price.

with containing a *manifest fallacy*, by Mr. Marshall, (a writer professing himself to be against the non-jurors, and who was one of the chaplains in ordinary to the king,) in *A defence of our constitution in church and state ; or, An answer to the late charge of the non-jurors, accusing us of heresy and schism, perjury and treason.* (1717.)

This was the leading occasion which brought Mr. Sykes forward in vindication of the bishop, in the present case; notwithstanding which, such vindication was accompanied with some very just reprehension of Mr. Marshall, for several suspicious, equivocal, and exceptionable doctrines and arguments. The title of this tract is, (X.) *Some remarks on Mr. Marshall's defence of our constitution in church and state. With an appendix, containing a brief inquiry into the meaning of those words of the 20th article, " the church hath authority in " controversies of faith."* (1717.) The matter contained in these *Remarks* is arranged under five separate heads.

I. A vindication of the argument made use of by the bishop; " whatsoever power
" hath

" hath a right to do a greater thing,
 " which includes in it a less, hath a right
 " to do the less included in it. The civil
 " power hath a right to do a greater thing
 " which includes deprivation, and there-
 " fore hath a right to do the less."

2. Of Mr. Marshall's account of the *Authority of the church*, wherein he pleaded for the suppression of the publication of all sentiments or opinions which were not agreeable to the church, or established system.

3. Of Mr. Marshall's conduct in defence of the state; more particularly in respect to his accommodating his defence more to the scheme of the non-jurors themselves, than resting it upon the genuine principles of the revolution.

4. Inquiry is made whether Mr. Marshall had not vindicated our government as if the revolution were a matter of shame, and really unjustifiable.

5. The consequences of his principles, or positions, shewn to be embarrassing to the then government, fatal to the succession, serving to expose the revolution, and, in general, hurtful to the ends of all go-

vernment: and, lastly, to have been advanced in vindication of Dr. Hicks, and serving to confirm non-jurors in their strongest objections against the present settlement.

The *Appendix*, contains a brief inquiry into the meaning of those words of the 20th article, *the church hath authority in controversies of faith*. This inquiry is a continuation of the reasoning under the second head before-mentioned; tending to prove, by the following arguments, that the authority of the church, cannot be an absolute authority to determine all controversies, such an one as will require in the subjects and servants of Christ an absolute submission.

1. "He alone can have an absolute authority in matters of faith, and alone can demand an absolute submission, who is indued with a spirit of infallibility. But no man, nor collection of men, are indued with a spirit of infallibility, therefore no man, nor collection of men, can have an absolute authority in controversies of faith."

2. "Those

2. "Those only can have an absolute authority in controversies, who have a right to an absolute obedience to their determinations. But no men, since the apostles, have a right to an absolute obedience to their determinations."

3. "That authority which puts upon a level, the determination of man, and the determination of God, ought not to be submitted unto. But an absolute authority in the church, puts upon the level, the determinations of man, and the determinations of God, therefore it ought not to be submitted unto."

4. "Where every man has a right to examine and to judge for himself, there submission to mere authority is impossible. But in matters of religious concern, every man has a right to examine, and to judge for himself."

5. "We maintain against the papists, that the scriptures are our alone rule of faith. If we really mean so, and think our arguments conclusive, then it will follow, that the determinations of any controversy of faith, cannot be submitted to upon the mere authority of the church ;

because then, not the scriptures, but such determinations, would be made the rule of our faith."

6. "The scriptures nowhere give to any men an absolute authority to determine controversies of faith, nor do they require an absolute obedience to the mere authority of the church. The apostles themselves never challenged such an authority, but declared, *we have not dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.*"

7. "Such an authority of the church in matters of faith, as demands absolute submission from inferiors, is needless, and can serve to no good purposes, as not being able or proper to attain the ends for which it is pretended.

8. "The church, by *authority in controversies of faith*, doth not, cannot claim an absolute submission with respect to subjects. This article was composed at a time, when she was strenuously engaged against those who claimed an absolute submission."

9. "The church has limited her authority, not only in this, but in several
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ral other articles, to the standard of scripture, as in the 6th, 19th and 21st articles." And the conclusion is, "An authority therefore, consistent with a judgment of discretion, is what is asserted in controversies of faith; and such a submission, as is owing to the judgment of learned men assembled together for the determination of a controversy, is all the submission that is required."

Thus far the arguments of our author. Their weight and importance will be measured by the different apprehensions of different people; but surely the weaker part of his reasoning must be confessed to be in his explications of the positive demands of the established church to an authority in controversies of faith, against which, all his *seven* former arguments appear to be conclusive.

Mr. Marshall's *Defence* failed not to give umbrage to some of his *old friends*; for having endeavoured at a middle road, accommodated to meet either side, as the event of things might make expedient, he was attacked in two other anonymous pamphlets,

phlets, on different ground. One of them was entitled, *A vindication of the late archbishop Sancroft, and of his brethren, the rest of the deprived bishops, from the reflections of Mr. Marshall in his defence.* (2d. edit. 1718.) The other, *An earnest exhortation for making up the breach between the established church, and the non-jurors.* In a letter to the Rev. Mr. Marshall, occasioned by his defence. (1717.)

The publication of the bishop of Bangor's *Preservative against the principles and practices of the non-jurors*, in the year 1716, before-mentioned, raised much clamour against him from the high-church party, who afterwards formally complained, that in his “ extreme opposition to certain un-
 “ warrantable pretensions to extravagant
 “ degrees of church-power, he seemed to
 “ have been so far transported beyond his
 “ temper and argument, as not only to
 “ condemn the abuse, but even to deny the
 “ use ; and to destroy the being of those
 “ powers, without which the church, as
 “ a society, cannot subsist, and by which
 “ our national constitution, next under
 “ Christ,

“ Christ, is chiefly supported.” § Hence it appears, that these committee-men wished to retain the uninterrupted possession of as much of the old leaven, as was any way consistent, or tenable with the favour of those who held the principles of the new government. The bishop’s *Preservative*, being soon followed by his *Sermon*, on the nature of Christ’s kingdom, preached before the king, in March 1717; these were thought to give sufficient occasion for the exercise of that very authority against which the bishop had so earnestly and repeatedly remonstrated. The *preservative* and *sermon* were, together, supposed to contain “ several dangerous positions and doctrines;” and therefore were so voted, *nem. con.* by the lower house of convocation, on the 10th of May the same year. The tendency of which doctrines and positions being conceived and declared to be;

First; “ To subvert all government and discipline in the church of Christ, and to reduce his kingdom to a state of anarchy and confusion.”

Secondly;

§ See *Report of committee*, published 1717, p. 22.

Secondly ; “ To impugn and impeach the regal supremacy in causes ecclesiastical, and the authority of the legislature to enforce obedience in matters of religion, by civil sanctions.”^h

Thus much is here stated, barely to introduce the account of the share which Mr. Sykes took in that part of the Bangorian controversy, occasioned by the censure of the lower house of convocation.

Dr. Thomas Sherlock, then dean of Chichester, (afterwards bishop of London,) and one of the committee who drew up the *Report*, distinguished himself by his zeal against the bishop of Bangor. And the dean having only a few years before, (1712,) advanced on a public occasion, doctrines of the same *evil* tendency, with those then more lately maintained by the bishop, and against which the dean had, as a committee-man, been over forward to censure; it was not to be expected that the notoriety of the case should escape observation. Accordingly, Mr. Sykes was, among others, provoked to remark upon this

^h See *The report*, p. 4.

this conduct of dean Sherlock, in an anonymous tract, (which passed a second edition the same year) addressed to him, and entitled, (XI.) *A letter to the Rev. Dr. Sherlock, one of the committee of convocation appointed to draw up a Representation concerning the bishop of Bangor's Preservative and Sermon. Comparing the dangerous positions and doctrines contained in the doctor's sermon, preached Nov. 5, 1712; with those charged upon the bishop in the late Report of the committee.* (1717.)

The extracts produced by the letter-writer from dean Sherlock's sermon, which was preached before the lord mayor, do as expressly renounce and reject all temporal authority in the civil magistrate or others, in all the proper concerns of religion, as the bishop of Bangor had done in his sermon before the king. And notwithstanding dean Sherlock was a very zealous man in convocation against bishop Hoadly, he certainly advanced the same doctrine, in respect to the nature of Christ's kingdom, at St. Paul's, which he was so very forward to censure the bishop for preaching at St. James's. And consequently, he should either have
 assigned

assigned good reasons for altering his opinion; or have allowed that to be sound doctrine at court, which he himself had recommended in the city.

It was not so, however, with Dr. Sherlock, who presently figured in the way of defence, in a pamphlet, which he called, *An answer to a letter sent to the Rev. Dr. Sherlock, &c. relating to his sermon preached before the lord mayor, Nov. 5, 1712. (1717.)* The answerer taking the letter-writer at his word, in regard to his silence on the merits of the doctrine in question, proposed to let them rest “until the examination should be resumed in proper time and place.”ⁱ The merits were certainly not before the parties, but the appointment hinted at, was a little unfortunate, as the king very wisely prorogued the convocation soon after the report was made by the committee. A manœuvre by no means agreeable to the committee-men, whose temper and prowess had inspired them with all the confidence of victory. And the bishop of Bangor was so far from having solicited the dispersion of the

ⁱ See the dean's *Answer*, p. 5.

the enemy's troops, in order to screen himself by the exertion of regal authority, that he had not even the least knowledge of the intended prorogation 'till it took place.^k

It is not possible, from the want of arrangement, to give here any abstract of the arguments used by the dean; to say the least, even this learned and respectable writer seems to have been employed in lessening the force of that blow which he could not avoid. In the moment of distress, the dean cites some extracts from some of his former publications, but what have they to do in a charge confined to his fifth of November sermon? And when plain words pinch hard, he has the ready excuse,—“if our words were the same, yet our meaning was not.”^l

There was also some short notice taken of the letter-writer, in a *Postscript* to *The report vindicated from misreports*; (1717.) a pamphlet said to be written by Dr. Moss, dean of Ely, and a member also of the committee; but there is nothing material therein,

^k See the bishop's *Preface* to his *Answer to the representation of the committee*. vol. ii. of his Works, p. 448.

^l See his *Answer*, p. 30.

therein, or deserving particular observation ; it barely cites, with reprehension, some expressions which were used in speaking of the report ; and vindicates a quotation which had been made from a publication of Dr. Wake, then archbishop of Canterbury, and stated by the letter-writer, as unfavourable to the violent proceedings of the committee.

The unsatisfactory *answer* of the dean was soon followed by (XII.) *A second letter to the Rev. Dr. Sherlock, being a reply to his answer, &c. proving the doctrines maintained by the doctor in his sermon, Nov. 5, 1712, to be the same with those charged upon the bishop of Bangor, as pernicious, in the late report of the committee. With an Appendix, relating to a passage or two in Dr. Snape's second letter to the lord bishop of Bangor. To which is added, a Postscript to Dr. Sherlock, by the bishop of Bangor. (1717.)* To this, and the two succeeding letters addressed to Dr. Sherlock, and also to an intermediate pamphlet concerning him, Mr. Sykes prefixed his name.

The general method proposed to be observed in the disposition of the matter in
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this continuation of the dispute between Dr. Sherlock and Mr. Sykes, is, (1.) to consider the dean's state of the point concerning the magistrate's power, as it lies dispersed in his *answer*, and to examine his conduct thereon; (2.) to consider those passages of the bishop's sermon, the consequences of which the dean had entered into; and (3.) to inquire into the meaning of the particular passages of the dean's sermon, which were produced in the former letter, *in which alone*, he was charged with an agreement with the bishop.

In this *second letter* the dean is followed in all his windings and doublings to escape, and in all his attempts to extricate the plainest words of his fifth of November sermon, from the grievous charge of holding any agreement with the bishop's *preservative* and *sermon*. One great object of the writer of this *second letter*, was, to give a decisive answer to the question, "What is the proper business of the magistrate?" To reconcile the dean to himself, was no part of the letter-writer's design. And indeed, all the dean's explications of himself, and of his meanings, appear to be the effects
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of his playing fast and loose with his own doctrines, which he wished to disown, on account of their real agreement with the bishop's *preservative* and *sermon*: and which he dared not, or did not care expressly to avow, because of the consequences, with respect to the *report*, in which he had the chief hand, and to the committee, of which he was a leading member. But as the dean ultimately disclaimed any agreement with the bishop of Bangor in the principles of the sermon, the following distinct questions were proposed, in order to bring the matter to a decisive issue between the parties.

1. Do you disclaim, (asks Mr. Sykes,) this general principle; *Temporal punishments are not proper to enforce the laws and edicts of Christ*—which is the principle of the first passage cited from you? If you do, then you must maintain, that *temporal punishments are proper to enforce the laws and edicts of Christ.*"

2. "Do you disclaim this general principle, (v. third passage cited from you) *It is contrary to the genius and spirit of the christian religion to found it's faith in temporal punishments.*—If you do, then you must main-

maintain this; 'Tis agreeable to the genius and spirit of the christian religion to found it's faith in temporal punishments."

3. " Do you disclaim this general principle, which is the fourth passage,—*The church has no right to impose penal laws on any account, and in matters of purely a religious nature, the state has no right neither?*—If you do, you must maintain, that, in matters of purely a religious nature, the state has a right to impose penal laws. And the like of the church too."

4. " Do you disclaim this position, which is the fifth passage,—*All methods of propagating religion which are hurtful and injurious to men, are inconsistent with the honour of God and religion?* If you do, you must maintain, that some methods of propagating religion which are hurtful to men are consistent with the honour of God, and religion."

5. " Do you disclaim this principle, which is the sixth passage, *Temporal punishments are not agreeable to the spirit of christianity?* If you do, you must maintain, that they are agreeable.

6. " Do you disclaim this, (*ibid.*) *The kingdom of Christ is not to be erected, or*

supported by worldly power ? If you do, you must assert, that it is to be erected and supported by worldly power."

7. " Do you disclaim these principles ; *The magistrate is not to debar men the liberty of following the best light they can get, in choosing their opinions, nor is he to hurt them for opinions which do not affect the state, nor is he to drive men into opinions ? If you do, you must maintain the reverse of these.* ^m

The *Appendix* relates to a passage or two in Dr. Snape's *Second letter to the lord bishop of Bangor*. The first of these passages, against which just offence is taken by Mr. Sykes, is, where Dr. Snape charges the bishop of Bangor, his admirers and seconds, as *enemies of all revelation*; and he is here called upon, in a very serious manner, to bring proofs of his charge, or to retract his vile and detestable imputations. Mr. Sykes next answers Dr. Snape's requisition; who, after admitting a man to examine his religion, insists, that " during such examination, he must submit himself to the yet unexamined decision of the church; and, if in
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^m See Mr. Sykes's *Second letter*, pages 73, 74.

the end unable to determine himself, that the authority of the church, as such, ought in conscience to determine him."

The *Postscript* of this second letter to Dr. Sherlock, was written by the bishop of Bangor, to assure the dean that he did not know of the former letter addressed to him 'till after it's publication; but his further purpose was more especially to vindicate himself, (and this he does with a seriousness and earnestness worthy of his cause and of himself,) against the imputation of "writing down the magistrate's power in all cases," and maintaining that "the world must be torn to pieces without remedy." Promising, at the same time, all future necessary defence of himself; and generously declaring his adversary to be "a person of great abilities and weight; and one, whom he could never persuade himself either to condemn, or to ridicule."ⁿ And further, he avowed generally, that what he had said against church authority, he had not intended against the church of Rome only, but "against all persons, in all churches, who carry on

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ⁿ See the *postscript*, pages 86, 87.

the same claim, whilst they disown it in words.” °

The publication of this *second letter*, with the *postscript* from the bishop, drew out again Dr. Sherlock, who had advanced too far to retreat with silence; and who had done little towards bringing the dispute to a con-

° Ib. pages 88, 89.—And bishop Hoadly, speaking elsewhere of Mr. Sykes's *second letter to Dr. Sherlock*, says, “ I did not look into that book, before it was
“ published. The main of the argument in it, I think
“ to be unanswerable; and so does every body, that I
“ have heard of, as well friend as enemy. The per-
“ sonal mixtures in it, Mr. Sykes does not expect me
“ to answer for, though the doctor does: I have never,
“ either in this, or any other instance, advised or en-
“ couraged any thing of that sort. The usage the
“ doctor has given *him*, the world will not easily think
“ to proceed solely from a persuasion, that his perform-
“ ance is contemptible. I am sorry to see such a sen-
“ tence as the last, in this performance, (Sherlock's
“ *considerations*) drop from the pen of any clergyman:
“ not because the doctor represents me as having a
“ tool, and Mr. Sykes as being one, which we both
“ disdain; and which he knew from my assurance to
“ be otherwise; but because of the manner in which
“ he has chosen to do this. No one who has read Mr.
“ Sykes can doubt his ability to defend himself.” —
See the bishop's *preface* to Pillionniere's *answer* to Dr. Snape's *accusation*. P.S. p. xxiii. (vol. ii. of the bishop's works, p. 597.)

a conclusion consistent and honourable to himself. The peculiar personal situation of the dean, between the doctrine maintained in the *report*, and that in the *sermon*, had necessarily led the parties aside from the *matter* to attend upon the *man*.

The dean's reply was however more particularly directed to the *postscript*, choosing, possibly, only to treat with the principal, in respect to his rank; though, in truth, he was more concerned with the "second," as he was pleased to call the letter-writer. The title of this piece was, *Some considerations, occasioned by a postscript from the right reverend the lord bishop of Bangor to the dean of Chichester, offered to his lordship.* (1717.)

The dean professed chiefly to maintain these two principles; (1.) "It is not true, that outward actions, as they affect society only, are the matter of human laws. (2.) "The account given by the bishop, divests the civil magistrate and his laws of all moral rectitude." ^p

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^p See Sherlock's *Some considerations, &c.* p. 21.

It would be to little purpose to separate the scattered expressions alternately advanced, excepted to, and defended by both parties. Dr. Sherlock certainly did not write with the good temper preserved by Mr. Sykes in his *second letter*, or by the bishop in his *postscript*. The dean was afterwards attended to by the bishop in his lordship's *answer to the representation of the committee*; but Mr. Sykes particularly addressed (XIII.) *A third letter to the reverend doctor Sherlock, being an answer to his considerations offered to the bishop of Bangor.* (1717.)

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Dr. Sherlock does not seem however to have carried his displeasure against his adversaries and their associates, into the little muddy streams of party resentment. At least, I have met with one testimony in his favour upon record, and I cite it with pleasure.— Dr. Clarke, in a letter to Mr. Jackson of Rossington, in August 1718, upon occasion of the high church party at Cambridge having formed so strong a party in the *caput*, against admitting Mr. Jackson to his master's degree, as to oblige him to desist from pursuing it, says, “ It is of great consequence to the jacobite cause, “ to discourage such persons as you are. I shall particularly thank the vice-chancellor,” [who was Dr. Gooch, master of Caius college] “ and dean Sherlock,” [who was then master of Catherine hall] “ for being “ of a better spirit.” See *Memoirs of Mr. Jackson*. 8vo. 1764. pages 50, 51.

In the title page of this *third letter* is a motto from Chillingworth, so aptly chosen, and so significant in it's application to the dean, that it may not be unacceptable to recite it.—“ All these,—for reasons best known to yourself, you have dealt with, as the priest and levite in the gospel did with the wounded Samaritan, that is, only looked upon him, and passed by. But now at least, when you are admonished of it,—I would intreat you to take them into your consideration, and to make some shew of saying something to them, lest otherwise the world should interpret your obstinate silence, a plain confession that you can say nothing.”^r

Dr. Sherlock, in his *considerations*, having quitted his defence of himself against the charge of contradiction and inconsistency in his writings, which was first brought against him by Mr. Sykes, and of which he was not able to clear himself; took the bishop of Bangor's *postscript*, before-mentioned, for the subject of his animadversion. But Mr. Sykes was not to be thus set aside, though

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^r Chillingworth's conclusion.

he confessedly was a correspondent whom the dean “ did not like ;” ^s and accordingly writ his *third letter* to Dr. Sherlock ; wherein, after some general notification of this manœuvre, and of his contemptuous treatment of him, again takes up the part of the bishop of Bangor, and replies to the dean’s two main principles, before stated from his *considerations*. ^t The concluding part of this *Third letter* ^u is employed upon what the dean had condescended to say in his *Considerations*, in respect to Mr. Sykes’s preceding letter.

Some observations upon the inquiry into what is the magistrate’s proper business, are stated in an *appendix*, as that question is treated of in the dean’s *sermon*, and his aforesaid *considerations* ; between which there appears to be as little agreement or consistency, as between the doctrines of the *sermon*, and the *report* of the committee. And in a *second appendix* is a *vindication of a passage in the former letter against Dr. Snape* ; wherein it is observed, that Dr. Snape had taken no notice

^s Dr. Sherlock’s *Considerations*, p. 76.

^t See page 69.

^u Sykes’s *Third letter*, pages 89—96.

notice of the call made upon him, to prove that the bishop of Bangor, and his admirers and seconds, were *enemies of all revelation*. And the former argument against Dr. Snape's plea for the submission of unexamined doctrines to the authority of the church, is vindicated; and the principles of such submission are reprobated.

About this stage of the controversy between Dr. Sherlock and Mr. Sykes, appeared "a rich specimen of the dean of Chichester's inconsistency," ^w in an ingenious and sensible little pamphlet, *ad hominem*, entitled, *A dialogue between Dr. Sherlock, dean of Chichester, and Dr. Sherlock, master of the Temple; published from original words. Being a justification of Mr. Sykes's charge, and a full reply to what the dean of Chichester has offered in order to reconcile himself to himself.* By Charles Norris, M.A. (1718.)

The controversy did not end here; the dean of Chichester continued his attacks on the bishop of Bangor; and the battle was fought with much perseverance on both sides.

^w See *Dialogue*, &c. p. 6.

fides. In the years 1717 and 1718, the dean published three other pieces against the bishop, to which his lordship severally replied. * Nevertheless, Mr. Sykes continued

* It may not be wholly foreign to our purpose to state the titles of these pieces, though we are no otherwise concerned in them, than as Mr. Sykes was further engaged in the controversy, in consequence of them.

Bishop Hoadly's *Answer to Dr. Snape's Letter to the bishop of Bangor.* 1717.

Dr. Sherlock's *Remarks upon the bishop of Bangor's treatment of the clergy and convocation.* 1717.

Bishop Hoadly's *Answer to the representation drawn up by the committee of the lower house of convocation.* 1717.

Dr. Sherlock's *Vindication of the corporation and test acts, in answer to the bishop of Bangor's reasons for the repeal of them. To which is added, a second part, concerning the religion of oaths.* 1718.

Bishop Hoadly's *Answer to the calumny cast upon the bishop of Bangor by the Rev. Dr. Sherlock, at the conclusion of his new book, entitled, A vindication, &c.* 1718.

Dr. Sherlock's *Condition and example of our blessed Saviour vindicated, in answer to the bishop of Bangor's charge of calumny against the dean of Chester.* 1718.

Bishop Hoadly's *Answer to a late book written by Dr. Sherlock, entitled, The condition and example, &c.* 1718.

These

nued his labours as an auxiliary to the bishop, and making these several publications of Dr. Sherlock the subject of his remark, he examined them with his wonted ability, in the tract, entitled, (XIV.) *The dean of Chichester's conduct considered, in his remarks upon the lord bishop of Bangor's treatment of the clergy and convocation ; his vindication of the corporation and test acts ; and the condition and example of our blessed Saviour vindicated.* (1718.)

In this piece our author distinctly considers what he judged necessary to notice in each, according to the order in which they were published, and are placed in his title page.

1. The dean's *remarks* ; in which there is shewn to be some very gross misrepresentation of the bishop's plainest language, and most obvious meaning.

2. His

These were followed, as stated in the text, by

Mr. Sykes's *Dean of Chichester's conduct considered.*
1718.

Dr. Sherlock's, *The bishop of Bangor's defence considered.* 1718.

Mr. Sykes's *Fourth letter to Dr. Sherlock.* 1718.

2. His *vindication* of the corporation and test acts. Upon which, Mr. Sykes observes the dean's changing the question, from *the nature of Christ's kingdom*, to the *vindication of the corporation and test acts*; and his attempt to consider the sacramental test, not as a *qualification* for a civil office, but only as a *proof* of such qualification, is shewn to be fallacious, and against the express words, as well as sense of law.

3. *The condition and example of our Lord vindicated.* Here Mr. Sykes makes some comments upon Dr. Sherlock's scripture criticisms, as well as his unfair state of bishop Hoadly's words: and argues, that Οικετης used by St. Peter, (1 Pet. ii. 18.) though it may sometimes signify *domestics*, more properly means *slaves*, in a much lower degree than the word Δελος, which rather imports *a servant after he was made free*: and that Δεσποτης, is the proper corollate to Οικετης, in the same passage, and decisive as to its true meaning. So also the dean's critique on μορφη δελε, *the form of a servant*, in Phil. ii. 7. as signifying *the servant of God*, shewn to be erroneous; though possibly Mr. Sykes's illustration of the

the passage may be no more satisfactory than the dean's, even in a subsequent attempt to explain it. ^y Mr. Sykes also contrasts the signification of *Δεσλος* and *Διακονος*, in Mark x. 43, 44. in opposition to the dean's argument, that they are equivalent; and considers some few other passages of less importance.

Dr. Sherlock, presently after, while he was paying his further respects to the bishop, in a pamphlet, entitled, *The bishop of Bangor's defence of his assertion, viz. that the example of our Lord is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than subjects, considered*; (1718)—steps on one side to wait on Mr. Sykes, in return for his last piece, which, together with the bishop's *Answer to a late book, &c.* had drawn forth the dean

^y See bishop Sherlock's *Discourses*, vol. iv. dis. i. on Phil. ii. 6—11. which was however particularly examined by Mr. Hopkins, in his *Trinitarian controversy reviewed*. 8vo. 1760. p. 465—489. But further, see Mr. Lindsey's explanation of this passage, in his *Sequel*, p. 272—278. And again in his *Historical view*, p. 221—223. in correction of the late bishop Newton's illustration, in a charge to his clergy. See also the *Sequel*, p. 350, 351. note, in reference to Dr. Clarke's application of this place to the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

dean to renew his baffled efforts. The dean treats only of Mr. Sykes's criticisms, commencing his remarks not 'till the 38th, and concluding them in the 45th page of his pamphlet; without taking any notice of any thing that had been said by him respecting the two former tracts mentioned in the title page.

Mr. Sykes thinking, however, that sufficient cause was given in these *considerations* for him once more to continue his correspondence, he replied in (XV.) *A fourth letter to the reverend doctor Sherlock, being an answer to his late book, entitled, The lord bishop of Bangor's defence of his assertion, considered.* (1718.) This piece closed the dispute; and Mr. Sykes being as happy in decorating the title page with an extract from Hooker, as he had been on a former occasion, from Chillingworth, it is equally deserving of a transcript.^z

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^z “ So easy is it for every man living to err, and so
 “ hard to wrest from any man's mouth the plain ac-
 “ knowledgment of error, that what hath been once
 “ inconsiderately defended, the same is commonly per-
 “ sisted in, as long as wit by whetting itself is able to
 “ find out any shift, be it never so slight, whereby to
 “ escape

The whole of this *fourth*, and last letter to Dr. Sherlock is employed in insisting and demonstrating the doctor's misrepresentation of that expression of bishop Hoadly's, which had been charged upon Dr. Sherlock as a calumny; and had been supported only by the dean's garbling and mistating the passage written by the bishop.^a Towards the conclusion indeed there

“escape out of the hands of present contradiction. So
 “that it cometh herein to pass with men unadvisedly
 “fallen into error, as with them whose state hath no
 “ground to uphold it, but only the help which by
 “subtle conveyance they draw out of casual events,
 “arising from day to day, 'till at length they be clean
 “spent.”—See Hooker's *Eccles. Polity*. b. 3. §. 5.

^a This passage, which occasioned much altercation and dispute, is found in bishop Hoadly's *answer* to Dr. Atterbury, (see his works, vol. ii. p. 317.) and was published 1710. It may not be amiss to cite it here; observing by the way, that the expression appears in the argument unexceptionable, and sufficiently guarded by the context; and certainly was never intended to convey, or thought by the writer, capable of bearing Dr. Sherlock's harsh and uncandid interpretation. The doctor might, at the time, labour under the effect of a controversial jaundice. For as himself afterwards observes, much to his honour, when bishop of Salisbury, in a letter in the year 1734 to Mr. Balguy, who had been

there is some further examination and defence of his former criticism on the words *Δεσλος* and *Ουδοετης*, in reference to the passage in the first epistle of St. Peter.

The agitation of the Bangorian controversy, however it might alarm the fears, and disturb the minds of some; and raise and bring forward the angry spirits of others, was, in its consequences, highly favourable to the advancement of the right knowledge of religious liberty. Inquiry is ever favourable to truth, which if it floats not upon the surface, requires only to be diligently and honestly sought for. The nature of Christ's kingdom, and the proper province

been his adversary in this same Bangorian controversy; —“ Surely I should see, or you would see, something
“ that was obscured by the warmth of the controversy.”
(See the letter in the *Biographia Britannica*. 2d edit. by Dr. Kippis, art. BALGUY.) The controverted passage above referred to in bishop Hoadly, is as follows:—
“ The example of our Lord,” says the bishop, in reference to the text in St. Peter, “ is much more
“ peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves, by whose condition he is pleased frequently to describe his low
“ estate; than to subjects, whose condition is never
“ used to that purpose, and whom he is never said to
“ personate in his lowest and most oppressed condition.”

province of the civil magistrate, became better understood, when the question had been argued in all it's various shapes by Hoadly, Sykes, Jackson, Pyle, and Balguy on the one side, and by Sherlock, Snape, Trapp, Hare, and Stebbing on the other. And though very little has yet been done in the way of parliamentary authority, in consequence of this improvement in the knowledge and spirit of our religion, and the liberty which it enjoins us; nevertheless the minds of the people are enlarged, and in that enlargement they are become more tolerant; their temper has very sensibly improved along with their better knowledge. Legislators and judges have formed more just, and consequently more noble conceptions of the nature of religious liberty, and the necessity of allowing it to have it's free course, in the fullest extent, that a rational advocate would plead for.

In the latter end of this year (Nov. 17, 1718.) Mr. Sykes was instituted to the rectory of Rayleigh in Essex, on the presentation of Robert Bristow, esq. and which he

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retained as long as he lived. ^b The profession of the same principles of liberty had led Mr. Bristow and Mr. Sykes to the acquaintance and friendship of each other: and when the former confirmed this intimacy by the presentation to Rayleigh, the latter took the earliest opportunity to acknowledge the obligation, and also the enhancement of the favour, by the manner and circumstances of conferring it. ^c

In the course of the same month of November, upon his institution to Rayleigh, he resigned his rectory of Dry-Drayton near Cambridge. ^d And on the 22d of December following, at a meeting of the governors and directors of King-street chapel, Golden-square,

^b See Morant's *Hist. of Essex*, vol i. p. 278.

^c See the dedication prefixed to his *Answer to Mr. Rogers's Discourse of the visible and invisible church of Christ*, published 1720.—Also Mr. George Sykes, after an interval of nearly fifty years, gave by will to Robert Bristow, esq. (the son of his own patron at Hawkeswell, and of his brother's at Rayleigh,) the bulk of his fortune, in return, as he declares, for his father's generous, voluntary and unsolicited patronage of his brother and himself: and for Mr. Bristow, the son's presentation of himself to succeed his brother at Rayleigh.

^d From the information of Mr. Masters.

square, (at which six out of nine were present, and among these, Dr. Clarke and Sir Isaac Newton,) Mr. Sykes was nominated by the rector of St. James's (Dr. Clarke) to the afternoon preacher'ship at the chapel, on the resignation of Dr. Thomas Hayley, and unanimously appointed.^e

Mr. Sykes was not an indifferent spectator of the prosecutions which some gentlemen of the university of Cambridge had instituted, and were then engaged in against Dr. Bentley, the professor of divinity. These proceedings were unjust and oppressive; and are generally supposed to owe their rise, and the acrimony with which they were conducted, to the malice of a disappointed party, disaffected to the then government.^f Several pamphlets were written on both sides. The ostensible occasion of the dispute was Dr. Bentley's

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demanding

^e From "The book of the acts of the trustees of King-street chapel," kept by Mr. Benefold, their agent, who very obligingly admitted me to peruse it. The chapel, is a chapel of ease to St. James's Westminster.

^f See *Biographia Britannica*, second edition. vol i. p. 238---242.

demanding, as divinity professor, an extraordinary fee of four guineas, at the creation of the doctors in divinity, by royal mandate, the day after the king's visit to the university. The demand of this fee, it seems, which was neither authorized by statute, nor to be justified by antient custom, was, nevertheless, countenanced by similar demands, which had been made by Dr. Gooch, the vice-chancellor, and Dr. Grigge, who were two of the most active adversaries of Dr. Bentley. But, it often happens, where personal pique and party quarrels are the grounds of a prosecution, that every ungenerous and malignant advantage is taken of the defendant. Thus, the charge of extortion against Dr. Bentley, and the proceedings instituted against him by Dr. Middleton, which went on to an arrest for the debt, and to his putting in bail, took a very unexpected turn. When Dr. Bentley was served with the writ by one of the beadles of the university, he somewhat emphatically observed, that " he would not " be concluded by what the vice-chancellor " and two or three of his friends should " determine

“determine over a bottle.” Which, though interpreted into a contempt of the jurisdiction of the vice-chancellor, was, in fact, saying no more than that he would not be concluded by the private determinations of the greatest magistrate, in any matter that is the proper subject of a public court. Indeed without entering minutely into the particulars of the case, there appears upon the face of it, no little cause to suspect the justice of the proceedings, when his judge had before said, that “if ever “Dr. Bentley’s case came before him, he “would condemn him.” And the facts upon record, demonstrate that the vice-chancellor kept his word.

In the concluding part of the business, Dr. Bentley being judged *contumacious*, for his non-attendance in the vice-chancellor’s court, and treating the authority of the university with contempt, he was first suspended from his degrees, and afterwards deprived of them. These measures were followed by many harassing and dilatory proceedings; nor was he restored to his honours, but by mandamus from the court of king’s bench, upwards of ten years after

the commencement of the proceedings against him.

There was published upon this occasion, by our author, a pamphlet, which is clearly and candidly written, called (XVI.) *The case of Dr. Bentley, regius professor of divinity, truly stated; wherein two late pamphlets, entitled, The proceedings of the vice-chancellor, and the university, &c. and A full and impartial account of the late proceedings, &c. are examined.* (1719.) From this case some part of the preceding account has been taken. And when there came out, *A second part of The full and impartial account*, (which was written by Dr. Middleton) Mr. Sykes replied in his own defence, in (XVII.) *The case of Dr. Bentley, further stated and vindicated, in answer to a "second part of The full and impartial account, &c.* (1719.) §

This last piece provoked Dr. Middleton's further displeasure, and being one of Dr. Bentley's most active and zealous adversaries, he was led to exceed all the bounds of decorum, in *Some remarks upon a pamphlet, entitled,*

§ See Mr. Gough's *British Topography*. vol. i. p. 240—246. second edition, 1780.

entitled, “ The case of Dr. Bentley further stated and vindicated, &c.”—“ The author “ of the pamphlet here remarked,” (says the editor of the *General biographical dictionary*,^h) “ was the well-known Dr. Sykes ; “ and he is treated here by Dr. Middleton “ with great contempt and severity : who “ seems, however, afterwards to have “ changed his opinion of him, and to have “ been upon very charitable terms with “ him : for, in his *Vindication of the “ free inquiry into the miraculous powers,* “ which was published after his death, he “ appeals to Dr. Sykes’s authority, (in his “ *Impartial consideration of the two previous “ questions,*) and calls him *a very learned “ and judicious writer.*”ⁱ So much for Dr.

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Middleton’s

^h See Art. MIDDLETON (Conyers.)

ⁱ See Dr. Middleton’s works, 2d edit. 8vo. vol. ii. pages 175, 176.—It is to be observed, that neither the *Full and impartial account*, nor the *Remarks* here spoken of, as written against Mr. Sykes’s *Case of Dr. Bentley further stated, &c.* are republished in Dr. Middleton’s miscellaneous works in five volumes in octavo, above cited ; though really said so to be, in a catalogue of the doctor’s works prefixed to the first volume. And as it would have been for the credit of Dr. Middleton, had they never been written, the judgment of the editor is to be commended, in the omission of them.

Middleton's conversion to a better opinion of Dr. Sykes.

In the same year also, Mr. Sykes entered the lists in the trinitarian controversy, on the part of Dr. Clarke; and being desirous of concealing his name, he assumed the appellation of "a clergyman in the country,"^k in the title page of (XVIII.) *A modest plea for the baptismal, and scripture-notion of the trinity. Wherein the schemes of the reverend Dr. Bennet, and Dr. Clarke, are compared.* (1719.) There are two letters also, of considerable length, which were published along with this plea, under a continuation of the number of the page; these were written by Dr. Clarke, the former addressed to the reverend Richard Mayo; the latter to the author of a book entitled, *The true scripture doctrine, &c.*^l

Mr. Sykes begins with the state of the controversy between Dr. Bennet, and Dr. Clarke;

^k See an extract of a letter from Dr. Clarke to Mr. Jackson, in *the memoirs* of the latter, p. 55, note *

^l The writer of the last mentioned book, was Dr. James Knight, vicar of St. Sepulchre's, London, as I am very credibly informed.—Dr. Clarke's two letters are republished in the folio edition of his works. vol. iv. p. 361—448.

Clarke ; and proceeds to a particular comparison of their respective schemes, under the several parts of the general subject. He assumes the office of moderator between the two disputants ; and though there is a confessed predilection in favour of one side of the question, I do not recollect a single line, wherein equal civility and good manners are not observed towards both parties. The acuteness of the controversialist, and the good temper of a candid and liberal mind, are the striking features of the whole. But, notwithstanding the kind services intended to have been performed by this *modest plea*, for such it really is ; yet that system which appeared so “ perfectly easy and comprehensible ” to the author of the plea, remains to the best apprehension of many, many other serious and inquisitive christians, no less “ mysterious,” and “ altogether as unintelligible,” as the system of Dr. Bennet, or any other of his reputed orthodox associates. For it is very observable, that there frequently was as little agreement in their meaning, between the adversaries of Dr. Clarke, one with another, as with the doctor himself, or his friends. And, on the other hand,

it

it may be remarked, that there is no reading the works of those great and worthy men, who supported what is generally called the *Arian* scheme, without observing that they no sooner extricate a passage of the sacred text, and ultimately the whole reasoning of the bible, from a gross misapplication to one system, than they are themselves involved in another, no less abhorrent to the plain untortured word of God.

The very learned and ingenious Mr. Taylor, author of *The apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai*, observes, in the address to the reader, prefixed to that work, “ that the
 “ world is halting between two very oppo-
 “ site opinions with regard to the *nature of*
 “ *Christ* ; some believing him to be the
 “ supreme God, which is inconsistent with
 “ his sufferings and death ; and others be-
 “ lieving that he had no existence before
 “ his birth of the virgin Mary, which is
 “ inconsistent with the whole account of
 “ his humiliation and descent from heaven
 “ to be made flesh : these opinions there-
 “ fore being both of them irreconcilable
 “ with the scriptures, the writer humbly
 “ conceives it may be of service to the
 “ christian

“ christian cause to lay before the world a
 “ third opinion, which lies between these
 “ two extremes, viz. that *Jesus Christ* was
 “ the angel of the covenant, or visible
 “ *Jehovah*, who so often appeared to the
 “ patriarchs in Shechinah, and gave the
 “ law.” ^m

But when the unprejudiced christian
 reader shall carefully inquire into and in-
 vestigate the import of those figurative
 phrases, “ the humiliation of Christ, and
 his descent from heaven to be made flesh ;”
 when he shall read the scriptures, and shall
 have them explained by natural and rational
 criticism, by the context in those places
 where these supposed doctrines occur, and
 by the whole scope of the bible ; I remain
 persuaded that he will think, what this
 writer calls *one extreme*, “ that Christ had
 “ no existence before his birth of the virgin
 “ Mary,” is no other than the clear and de-
 cided doctrine of the gospel. Nor can I see
 any other scheme that will vindicate the ab-
 solute unity and supremacy of God, and
 the consistency and truth of our common
 chris-

^m See *The apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai*. second
 edition. in two vols. 8vo. 1784.

christianity, but such interpretation of the new testament ; which appears at once, to agree with the united and concurring testimony of Moses and the prophets, of Christ himself, of his apostles, and, as far as we can learn with any certainty, of the three first ages of the christian æra. ⁿ

As in common life, honesty will ever be found the best policy ; so, in the concerns of religion, there can be no expediency, strictly speaking, in adopting any doctrine not founded in truth. The third or middle, opinion, recommended by the apologist, as lying between two extremes, may be the pre-

ⁿ Some criticisms upon the former edition of *The apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai*, immediately relating to the doctrine, which it was the main design of the writer of it to establish, deserve his special attention, though he has forbore to take notice of them in his late edition. The criticisms to which I refer, are in the learned Mr. Lindsey's valuable *Sequel to the Apology*. chapter vi. Of this work, and of his other labours in the cause of the divine unity, strictly and properly so understood, I forbear to say more ; lest the effusion of personal esteem and affection, should lead me to say too much ; and what I should mean and know to be no more than a tribute of justice, should, by others, be misconstrued into the language of adulation.

present prevailing and popular sentiment; notwithstanding which, I trust and pray, that men will progressively be led to acknowledge THE ONE GOD, AND ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.

But to return again to Mr. Sykes's *Plea*: After he has discussed the several parts of his subject, by marshalling the discriminating principles and tenets of the parties, he entitles his last chapter, "Of subscription to articles." And he was led to this by Dr. Bennet's declaring his persuasion that Dr. Clarke could not repeat his subscription without collusion. This observation is returned upon Dr. Bennet himself, since, without a latitude of interpretation, even his own scheme would not be admissible; and when once a latitude is assumed, beyond the plain meaning of ordinary language, the reputed heretics were equally entitled with the reputed orthodox, to measure out the exercise of their own liberty. Nevertheless, though Mr. Sykes makes Dr. Bennet's and Dr. Clarke's notions of the trinity, alike incompatible with a plain and direct assent to the articles

ticles of the established church ; it does not thence follow, that such compliance would be justifiable in both, or either of them. But Mr. Sykes being soon after engaged in a controversy with Dr. Waterland, upon this very subject, the weakness of all the arguments for accommodation will be more properly noticed in that place.

Some time about the year 1718, Dr. Clarke had caused to be reprinted some *Select psalms and hymns*, for the use of his parish of St. James ; in these he took the opportunity of altering the doxology, ascribing worship and glory to God *through* Jesus Christ. Some of these copies were bought, it seems, by “ the society for promoting of “ christian knowledge,” and dispersed by them without their having taken notice of the alteration. Hereupon Dr. Robinson, then bishop of London, out of his episcopal care for the more generally received form, set himself to prevent the ill effects of Dr. Clarke’s alterations, and the society’s inattention and oversight, in *A letter to the incumbents of all churches and chapels in his diocese, concerning their not using any new forms*

forms of doxology. dated Dec. 26, 1718. This letter was presently animadverted upon by Mr. Whiston, in his *Letter of thanks to the right rev. the lord bishop of London, for his late letter to his clergy against the use of new forms of doxology, &c.* dated Jan. 17, 1718-19. and also by Mr. Sykes, in a pamphlet, entitled, (XIX.) *An humble apology for St. Paul, and the other apostles; or, a vindication of them and their doxologies from the charge of heresy.* (1719.) This piece was published under the feigned name of "Cornelius Paets," but I know not the particular reason for his choosing this signature, or whether it had any reference, to a celebrated dutchman "Adrian Paets," of whom honourable mention is made by Mr. Bayle.

The bishop had expressed himself so indeterminately, in his letter concerning the doxologies, against the use of which he cautioned the incumbents in his diocese with so great solemnity; that both Mr. Whiston and Mr. Sykes humourously affected to understand by them, "the last form of doxology which the church invented; meaning thereby, the giving glory to the

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“ *Father, and to the Son, and to the holy*
 “ *ghost.*” And, as Mr. Sykes adds, “ sup-
 “ pose a man, by guessing, had the good
 “ fortune not to mistake the doxology de-
 “ signed, his lordship produced no reasons
 “ why he condemned it.” The doxolo-
 gies used by St. Paul, St. Peter, St. Jude,
 and St. John, are cited in support of those
 introduced by Dr. Clarke ; and thence it
 should seem, that Dr. Clarke’s forms are
 much nearer to an agreement with the lan-
 guage of the apostles, and consequently of
 greater and higher original, than that to
 which the bishop of London did really refer.
 But the bishop’s letter, however vaguely
 expressed in regard to the old or new forms
 of doxology, was peremptory in represent-
 ing Dr. Clarke to be under “ the strong de-
 “ lusions of pride and self-conceit.” So
 little knowledge had this prelate either of
 Dr. Clarke, or of himself.

The remark of Mr. Whiston upon
 this controversy, though frequently no-
 ticed, is worth reciting: “ This,” says he,
 “ I esteem one of Dr. Clarke’s most chris-
 “ tian attempts towards somewhat of re-
 “ formation, upon the primitive foot, that
 he

“ he ever ventured upon. But this at-
 “ tempt was so highly resented by bishop
 “ Robinson, that it produced a most fla-
 “ grant clause in a letter which he then
 “ wrote to the incumbents of his diocese,
 “ to caution them against using it. Which
 “ *old form*, the bishop in the simplicity
 “ of his heart, seemed to think *a new*
 “ *form of doxology*. This letter occasioned
 “ several pamphlets on both sides; two
 “ of which I was the author of: to which
 “ I must refer the inquisitive reader. Nor
 “ need I add, that the bishop, in the
 “ way of *modern authority*, was quite too
 “ hard for Dr. Clarke, in the way of
 “ *primitive christianity*.”^o

^o See *Historical Memoirs of Dr. Clarke*. p. 99.—
 And for a further account of this controversy, see
Biog. Brit. 2d edit. vol. iii. p. 603. note x. article
 CLARKE. The doxologies introduced by Dr. Clarke
 in the *Select psalms and hymns*, for the use of his
 parish, were the two following:

To God, *through* Christ, his only son,
 Immortal glory be,
 As 'twas, and is, and shall be so,
 To all eternity.

And,
 To God, *through* Christ, his son, our lord,
 All glory be therefore,
 As in beginning was, is now,
 And shall be evermore.

The diffidence and timidity in archbishop Herring, are to be lamented in a character so excellent and amiable. He had a liberal mind, and was well understood to think that a reformation was wanting of some of the doctrines of the church over which he presided : but his days were occupied in discouraging occasional acts of intolerance in his own time, without trying to infuse any of the meekness of his own temper into the laws of his country, for the security of those who lived after him. Even in the correction of the singing psalms, he shewed an apparent disinclination to go beyond the correction of the errors of the press. “The new edition,” says he, “of Tate and Brady is not come out, that I know of. The emendations suggested were much approved of, but my authority to alter them, made a matter of some doubt ; so the middle way was taken, of correcting the errors, not the imperfections.” (In the edition of these psalms, 1737, there were above two hundred errors of the press, as stated by Mr. Duncombe in a note.) And, while Dr. Carter was persecuted at Deal, for not reading the athanasian creed, the archbishop, contented himself with expressing his dislike of all disputes about the trinity. “Your friend Dr. Carter,” says he to the same correspondent, “is grievously teased by folks who call themselves *the orthodox*. I abhor every tendency to the trinity controversy. The manner in which it is always managed, is the disgrace and ruin of christianity.” See *Letters from archbishop Herring to William Duncombe, esq.*—12mo. 1777. letter xxxvii. dated Nov. 5, 1753. And in another letter dated in August the same year, to Dr. Jortin, relating to Dr. Clarke’s interleaved common-prayer book.—(see Mr. Maty’s *Review* for April 1782. vol. i. p. 241,) “I have read it ;”
says

says the archbishop, " have approved the temper, and
 " wisdom of it. But into what times are we fallen
 " after so much light, and so much appearance of
 " moderation, that one can only wish for the success
 " of truth? The world will not bear it, and the proof
 " is very evident from this abominable spirit that
 " rages against the Jews. I expect in a little time
 " they will be massacred. What a thin covering of
 " embers had kept down the fire of high-church!
 " We are now treating the Jews just as the Ma-
 " hometans treat the christians, who can afford them
 " no other epithet than christian dogs." But, until
 the experiment be fully and seriously made, by those
 in stations of authority and power, it cannot be
 known, how ready and anxious the world is to receive
 a reformation. Seasonable opportunities are repeat-
 edly lost, and liberal minded men pass off the theatre
 of life; and thus the dogmas of dark and ignorant
 ages remain the disgrace of the national church, in
 these days of improved light and knowledge!

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Sykes's controversy with Mr. Rogers on church power; his letter to lord Nottingham; appointment to the morning-preachership at King-Street chapel; controversy with Dr. Waterland on subscription; letter on the Quaker's bill; advancement to a prebend and the præcentorship in the church of Salisbury; two occasional sermons. 1720—1725.

AT a time when the subject of church authority had been much canvassed, and indeed while the question was yet pending between several very able disputants; Mr. Rogers published his *Discourse of the visible and invisible church of Christ. In which it is shewn, that the powers claimed by the officers of the visible church, are not inconsistent with the supremacy of Christ as head; or with the rights and liberties of christians, as members of the invisible church.*^a

This

^a The first edition was published in 1718; the third in 1720; and the fifth 1738.

This work has been much commended by the advocates for church authority; and with respect to the temper and seriousness with which it is written, is deserving of praise: but now the heats which men gave into, upon this subject, have in a good measure subsided, and the eyes of the nation have been opened by much subsequent sound reasoning and liberal investigation, Mr. Rogers's book is pretty generally estimated with very large abatements from its first reputation.

It was apprehended by Mr. Rogers, that there was much fallacy in the state of the argument, and the conclusions which were drawn by those who espoused the opinions, "that Christ was the sole ruler &c. in his church;" and "that all christians were professedly equal, &c." and who, so far as they had been convinced by them, so far they had been induced universally to reject this other great truth, "that Christ has appointed certain officers in his church, with authority of rule and jurisdiction over his disciples." — "The distress," says he, "into which the mind is brought by this fallacy, is the

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" appa-

“ apparent necessity of abandoning either
 “ the one truth or the other; either of
 “ denying, that Christ has any authority
 “ in his church, or of denying the whole
 “ external polity of it. Now this di-
 “ strefs can no way so effectually be re-
 “ lieved, as by assigning to each proposi-
 “ tion the just limits within which it is
 “ true; and then shewing that, within
 “ these limits, they are perfectly consistent
 “ with each other. By this it will be
 “ evident, that it may with equal truth
 “ be affirmed, with respect to the *invisible*
 “ church, that no christian hath authority
 “ over another; and with respect to the
 “ *visible*, that Christ has appointed some
 “ to rule over others; and that one of
 “ these propositions, when restrained to
 “ it's proper subject, does not in the least
 “ clash or interfere with the other.” ^b

This is the professed design of Mr.
 Rogers's discourse. And without entering
 into all it's divisions and subdivisions, it
 may be generally observed that in the exe-
 cution of this plan, he so effectually re-
 moves

^b Preface, pages ix, x, of the third edition.

moves Christ from any headship over his visible church, that as the whole routine of legislative authority, jurisdiction, doctrine and discipline of the established church are here maintained and defended; so might the establishment of the church of Rome be defended on the same principles, with still greater advantage, to the entire seclusion of the just plea for the protestant separation. This is one of those cases wherein the advocate, from an honest zeal for his client, proves too much. The distinctions of *visible* and *invisible* churches, are most accommodating phrases; they afford much advantage to an expert casuist, but more than ordinary skill is required in the use of them. If the disputant who is armed with these weapons, be once suffered to depart from first principles, he is equally prepared to combat giant or pigmy. He opens, as it were, a kind of pantomime scenery, against which there is no assurance in attack; and so long as it is kept in view, the plain enquirer stands on fairy ground. It is pretty generally true, in these cases, that when any thing has two handles, and it is in the option

of one party to say which is the wrong one, we shall very seldom find the other taking hold of the right one.

Notwithstanding these observations, this book of Mr. Rogers's, however hostile in it's operation to that just and reasonable liberty wherewith Christ hath left us free; to our acknowledging him to be our only lord and master here on earth; and to our diligently inquiring after these things: and at the same time, upon however false a foundation it is built, or however weak and futile are the arguments by which it is supported,—it has been much noticed, and, occasionally, held in much estimation.

Dr. Hare, then dean of Worcester, afterwards bishop of Chichester, who was a warm partizan on the same side, and a very learned man, observed upon this work, that “the ingenious author of *the visible* “and *invisible* church, who in compliance “with our adversaries, has very usefully “considered the church as an invisible “society, and to so good purpose, that “he has quite disarmed them of all the “advantage they could hope to make of “it,

“it, and shewn at large that it can do
 “them no service.”^c

This public testimony in favour of Mr. Rogers's *Discourse*, in some degree, it seems, excited Mr. Sykes to consider that work more particularly; ^d but we are, by no means warranted to suppose that it alone determined his mind upon the importance of the book, or the necessity of answering it. The nature of the question, and the very plausible way of treating the subject, gave it that popular cast, which would make it much read, and therefore more necessary to be critically examined.

The title of Mr. Sykes's answer is, (XXI.) *The authority of the clergy, and the liberties of the laity stated and vindicated. In answer to Mr. Rogers's discourse of the visible and invisible church of Christ.* (1720.) After demonstrating the futility of the distinction of visible and invisible church, which is laying the axe to the root of the tree, and destroying, in the compass of a few pages, the foundation whereon Mr. Rogers

^c See Dr. Hare's visitation sermon at Putney. 1719. preface, p. viii.

^d See Mr. Sykes's preface, p. vi.

Rogers has raised his whole superstructure of church work, (which Fuller tells the reader of his *Church history* “ is always flow ; ”) Mr. Sykes maintains, as the just deductions and consequences of his premises, that Christ is sole law-giver in his *visible* church ; that the powers of the clergy to teach, to minister, to legislate in matters regarding the profession of religious faith and public teaching, as also in matters of decency and order, are limited within reasonable bounds, derived from civil authority, or are their rights as men and members of the same society with others ; and are to be regulated by their tendency to the common convenience and advantage of the whole. He does not admit either the fact of their having, or the necessity of their laying claim to any immediate commission, or uninterrupted succession : and insists that the obedience due to them is consequently qualified in proportion to the authority by which they act. Mr. Sykes further proves that Mr. Rogers's principles and arguments are, in their immediate consequences, destructive of the rightful supremacy of Christ in

in his visible church, and of all christian liberty, and inconsistent with the principles of the reformation ; and that the arguments which are maintained by him in reply, are and must be maintained by all protestant writers in their disputes with the papists.

It would be to enter upon too large a field to attempt to give the particular arguments in this controversy, as there are so many links in the chain. It is but justice however to observe, that they are managed with great ability, and with equal good temper throughout. Bishop Hoadly has borne his testimony to the work before us, by way of reply to what Dr. Hare had said concerning Mr. Rogers's *Discourse* ; and he has expressed himself with so much candour and respect for both parties, that it would be wrong to omit his opinion of them, and may well supersede any other detail. “ The
 “ Rev. Mr. Rogers,” says he, “ the in-
 “ genious author of *The visible and invisible*
 “ *church*, certainly deserves commendation
 “ for the serious and good manner in which
 “ he has, generally speaking, handled his
 “ subject. Whether he has *quite disarmed*
 “ *his adversaries*, will best appear to the
 “ reader

“ reader from comparing it impartially with
 “ Mr Sykes’s complete and excellent exa-
 “ mination of it.”^e

Certainly there was no reason for Mr. Rogers to be concluded by bishop Hoadly’s opinion, and accordingly he replied, but very apparently not without the loss of temper, in a further investigation of his former arguments and defence of them, in *A review of a discourse of the visible and invisible church of Christ ; being a reply to Mr. Sykes’s answer to that discourse.*^f This Review is considered as an inseparable supplement to the *Discourse*, and is now almost always found bound up with it. The clear arrangement of the matter is preserved, and there is as much perspicuity of reasoning retained, as could be expected in a work where the basis is founded in mistake, and the arguments universally insufficient, and beside the purpose.

Dr.

^e See *Answer to Dr. Hare’s sermon on church authority.* 1719. pref. p. viii. or vol. ii. of bishop Hoadly’s works. p. 813.

^f The first edition was published 1721 ; the second 1722 ; and the third in 1738.

Dr. Hare, the then great champion of church power, thought highly of this work; and as himself and bishop Hoadly had before given their respective opinions of the *Discourse* and *Reply*, so he took the earliest opportunity of declaring his judgment of the *Review*. “Those,” says he, “who want yet further satisfaction, upon the points I have not entered into, will find more than I could have given, in Mr. Rogers’s excellent *Review*; through which there runs such a vein of clear and just reasoning, in every part of it, that it makes one doubly feel that strange want of logic, that is so conspicuous in the writers of the other side.”^g And yet the same Dr. Hare had before published, without his name, one of the best pleas for the right of private judgment, which we have in our language; so admirably tempered with wit and argument, as to have rendered it universally read and admired, and can only be answered by the removal of those “difficulties and discouragements which attend the study of the scriptures in the

^g See Dr. Hare’s *Scripture vindicated*. 1721. p. 163. note.

the way of private judgment," of which it so justly complains.^h

Mr. Whiston's share in the controversy concerning the trinity is well known, and among the number of his opponents was Daniel Finch, earl of Nottingham, son of the lord Chancellor, whose pamphlet was entitled, *The answer of the earl of Nottingham to Mr. Whiston's letter to him concerning the eternity of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* (1720.) The sixth edition of which was published in the course of the next year. Lord Nottingham received the "solemn thanks" of the university of Oxford for what they stiled "his most noble defence of the christian faith;"ⁱ and to second this public testimony of the University,

^h The title of this tract is, *The difficulties and discouragements which attend the study of the scriptures in the way of private judgment; represented in a letter to a young clergyman. In order to show that, since such a study of the scriptures is mens indispensable duty, it concerns all christian societies to remove (as much as possible) those discouragements.* By a presbyter of the church of England. The fourth edition was published 1714; the sixth in 1715; ^{the 10th in 1735;} the eleventh in 1769; for R. Horsfield,

ⁱ See Collins's *Peerage*. 5th edit. vol. iii. p. 294.

sity, the archdeacon of London moved his brethren, “the city clergy,” to send their thanks also to his lordship for his services. The motion was carried among the London clergy; and the university of Cambridge followed the example of Oxford. Mr. Whiston replied to lord Nottingham, and what he further thought of the noble earl’s performance, may be seen in a letter to archbishop Wake, preserved in his *Memoirs*, where his candid and liberal sentiments do him much honour.^k

These proceedings of “the city clergy” induced Mr. Sykes, under the character of “a curate of London,” to consider more particularly the merit of lord Nottingham’s *Answer*, in a letter addressed to him, and entitled, (XXII.) *A letter to the R. H. the earl of Nottingham, occasioned by a late motion made by the archdeacon of London, at his visitation, for the city clergy to return their thanks to his lordship for his answer to Mr. Whiston.* (1721.) A second edition of this letter was published within the course of the year, and has been

^k See Whiston’s *Memoirs*. vol. i. p. 219—226.

been further preserved, by being republished in a subsequent collection of scarce and valuable tracts.¹

Mr. Sykes declares against entering into the merits of the trinitarian controversy, and professes to confine the reasons of his dissent from the intended compliment to his lordship, to certain other exceptionable passages in his *Answer*. The first reason stated is, because his lordship justifies persecution, grounded on the advice of Macenas, (an heathen) to Augustus, “never to suffer any innovation in religion, because the peace of the state depended upon it.” Which reason of state, if right and just, would have prevented the preaching of Christ and his apostles; and afterwards would have hindered the reformation from popery; and would justify the persecution of Lewis XIV. in France, against the protestant subjects; and of the duke of Savoy against the Piemontoise; and would equally justify the established religion of every country.

And

¹ See Baron's *Pillars of priestcraft and orthodoxy shaken*. vol. iii. p. 149—191.

And though it is admitted that disturbances have generally happened in states, on the admission of "innovations in religion;" nevertheless, the cause of such disturbances is to be found in the state's interfering where it hath no right, and should not be placed to the account of the "innovation."

The application of the punishment of idolatry and blasphemy, in the old Testament, under the jewish theocracy, is proved to be foreign either to the purpose of the athanasian, or the arian, under the christian dispensation; both of whom should believe according as they shall think, in the full persuasion of their own mind, to be agreeable to the word of God. And in a short *postscript* annexed, the same subject is resumed, and further considered, in respect to what had fallen from lord Nottingham.

The charge of persecution which had been brought against the arians, is admitted, but retorted upon the *orthodox*, (without excusing either, but censuring all parties,) by proving that Arius and

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his

his followers were first persecuted by the emperor, soon after the Nicene council.

The objection made to the Plea, “to suffer the tares sown by the enemy to grow with the wheat,” is answered by a fair construction and application of the parable of the sower; with some reference to the cases of Mr. Emlyn and Mr. Whiston; and a defence against the imputation of their “reviling, trampling on, and putting to open shame the Son of God.”

And the desire expressed by lord Nottingham, that those who were in authority would interfere in defence of the faith, is answered, by reminding his lordship that such interference tends only to punish, not to refute. And the very low credit of synods, as also of convocations, is forcibly and aptly stated from the authorities of Gregory Nazianzen, and Dr. Wake, then archbishop of Canterbury.

Mr. Sykes had now been engaged three years in King-street chapel, and the morning preachership beoming vacant by Dr. Wilcocks's

cocks's promotion to the bishopric of Gloucester in 1721, Mr. Sykes was, on the 21st of December in the same year, again nominated by Dr. Clarke to succeed him; and in consequence thereof, he was again unanimously appointed to this advanced situation, by the like number of the governors and directors of that endowment, as on the former occasion, among whom Sir Isaac Newton was this second time also present. The same day Dr. Dunstar was appointed to succeed Mr. Sykes in the afternoon preacher'ship.^m

In consequence of some apologies for, or defences of subscription to the thirty-nine articles, made by certain persons, who were suspected of arianism; and, more particularly such as were to be found in Dr. Clarke's *Scripture doctrine of the trinity*, his *Reply to Mr. Nelson*, and other publications about the same time; Dr. Waterland took the question into consideration, and made it the

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subject

^m From "The book of the acts of the trustees of King-street chapel."

subject of his inquiry in a pamphlet published 1721, entitled, *The case of Arian-subscription considered; and the several pleas and excuses for it, particularly considered and refuted*. After a short state of the occasion and design of his papers, Dr. Waterland recites the general principles or sentiments of the modern Arians, (some of them at least) concerning subscription to our public forms; and he maintains, that the sense of the compilers, when certainly known, (as in the present case it is,) is to be religiously observed by every subscriber, even though the words were capable of another sense. He then considers the several pleas and pretences for subscribing, after the new method; and extracts such pleas chiefly from Dr. Clarke's "introduction" to his *Scripture doctrine*; he has divided them into sixteen separate pleas, and has to each of them subjoined a separate answer. The consideration of these being closed, he maintains, in his last chapter, the affirmative of his argument against arian subscription, "that several expressions in our
 " public forms, are really not capable of
 " a sense

“ a sense consistent with the arian hypothesis, or new scheme.”

In the midst of what some plain people would call tritheism or nonsense, there is, in this pamphlet, much good reasoning against any prevarication in subscription; and several of the particular pleas drawn from Dr. Clarke's writings are well answered. Nevertheless, Dr. Waterland, whose orthodoxy has never passed under any formal imputation, has himself recourse to no less equivocal pleas for his accommodation to the calvinistic, than Dr. Clarke had for his own compliance with the trinitarian articles. And there is no authority which denies the liberty taken in the one case, and admits it in the other.ⁿ

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Dr.

ⁿ I find the same idea suggested by Mr. Whiston in his *Historical memoirs of Dr. Clarke*; wherein, speaking of certain omissions in the second edition of Dr. Clarke's *Scripture doctrine*, which were noticed by Dr. Waterland, he observes,—“ In all which I agree with Dr. Waterland: and would recommend it to him to imitate, nay to outdo Dr. Clarke: I mean in no more vindicating or signing the calvinistic articles: which he himself does not much more believe, than the other believed the athanasian.—But *non videmus id manticæ quod in tergo est.*” See *Historical memoirs*, p. 108.

Dr. Waterland had no bad footing in this debate, had he admitted his argument to have applied in all cases equally; but being to be enforced, or changed, according as the particular case or subject might be supposed to vary, that is, in respect to different articles, it was no more tenable, *in foro conscientiae*, than the latitudinarian scheme maintained by his adversaries. Notwithstanding which, Mr. Sykes replied to Dr. Waterland in a pamphlet entitled, (XXIII.) *The case of subscription to the xxxix articles, considered. occasioned by Dr. Waterland's Case of arian subscription.* (1721.)

Mr. Sykes generally and principally insists, that we are called upon to subscribe to such and such propositions, and to declare that we think those general propositions agreeable to the word of God, without regarding the sense either of the compilers or imposers of the articles. This may be taking the most plausible ground of defence of the latitudinarian scheme, but surely the propositions contained in the articles are too determinately expressed, to admit fairly either of arian or armianian

nian subscription, (whatever might be the sense of the compilers or imposers if inquired into,) without having recourse to some subtle explications of the plain, direct, and obvious meaning of the words. The disagreement in opinion between Drs. Waterland and Bennet, both of whom had the reputation of being orthodox, on the eternal procession of the holy spirit, is not omitted to be observed by our author; so also the disagreement in opinion between bishop Bull, doctors Wallis, South, Sherlock, &c. on the trinity. And further, the practice of arminian subscription to calvinistic articles is not overlooked by him, or failed to be applied to the case of what is called arian subscription to trinitarian articles; but this is only an argument *ad homines*, and defending one unjustifiable practice by another; and may be said to be cutting the knot, instead of untying it. Mr. Sykes has replied to all Dr. Waterland's answers to the pleas for a latitude, with great acuteness, but I do not think with equal advantage, or to the satisfaction of an impartial examiner. In the general

principle of his defence, that subscription is required only to such and such general propositions, and that these are agreeable to the word of God, Mr. Sykes is countenanced by Dr. Bennet, as appears by a long citation from his *Essay on the xxxix articles*; but the sanction of legal authority is still wanting to confirm this assumed latitude, or to remove all cause of equivocation.

Mr. Sykes's *Case of subscription to the xxxix articles*, was answered by Dr. Waterland the next year, in *A supplement to the case of arian subscription, considered*. (1722.) Dr. Waterland here insists, and surely with great reason, upon the determinate sense of the articles and liturgy; and draws out two separate columns, contrasting the *scripture doctrine of the trinity*, according to Dr. Clarke and his followers, against the *scripture doctrine of the trinity*, according to the church of England in her public forms. And after stating the consequences of the arian hypothesis, he collects the solemn declarations required by the church, and the evasions and contradictions of arian sub-

subscribers, into the form of a creed; and this he does, in order the more openly to shew the inconsistency of their public professions, with their real private opinions, and that the established forms are fixed, special, and determinate.

Dr. Waterland having particularly considered the leading principle of Mr. Sykes's answer, in respect to the general propositions of the articles, and then urged their clear and determinate sense, proceeds to more scattered matter; he cites several passages from Mr. Sykes's *Case*, as so many *objections* to the arguments and observations in his first pamphlet, and subjoins *answers* to each of them.

The charge of calvinism upon the church of England, and the argument deduced from arminian subscription are examined, with some pains, and attempted to be refuted. But all that is said on these subjects is ineffectual and insufficient, and against an abundance of proofs which may be brought to the contrary.* Dr. Waterland

* See a tract entitled, *The church of England vindicated from the charge of arminianism; and the case of arminian sub-*

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° See a tract entitled, *The church of England vindicated from the charge of arminianism; and the case of arminian sub-*

land also replies to the countenance which Mr. Sykes imagined to be given to his general argument by Dr. Bennet; and avails himself, in turn, of some ingenuous declarations and arguments of Mr. Whiston against arian subscription; and takes refuge, under his name, for all the hard things he may be supposed to have said of those, who stood in that predicament.

The animadversions contained in this *Supplement* of Dr. Waterland's to his *Case*, which together are valuable, produced a second and concluding tract from Mr. Sykes, entitled, (XXIV.) *A reply to Dr. Waterland's supplement to the case of arian subscription*. (1722.) The design and aim of this *Reply* is to argue specially, that the articles and phrases usually called trinitarian, will bear an arian sense; an assumption that was denied by Dr. Waterland. That scholastic terms, used with much subtilty, may twist and distort some expressions,

subscription particularly considered. 8vo. 1769. and Top-lady's *Historic proof of the doctrinal calvinism of the church of England*. 2 vols. 8vo. 1774. To whom the former tract has also been ascribed.

expressions, which in themselves are certainly unscriptural, may be admitted; but it is one thing to confound, and another to convince the understanding. And it yet remains to be proved, that the articles will, in their usual grammatical meaning bear an arian sense.

The appeal which Mr. Sykes makes to various other expressions in the established forms, wherein he presumed that Dr. Waterland himself made use of reserve or latitude, are only, in truth, so many just arguments against the use of the present, or the policy of the imposition of any subscription; and not in justification of a qualified one, when a plain and open one is required by the imposer, and supposed to be made by the subscriber, in order to prevent diversity of opinions. ^p

Mr.

^p Still more unjustifiable was the practice of the protestant dissenters in requiring confessions of faith from their candidates for ordination. Probably the case of Dr. Caleb Fleming about the year 1739, is the first exception to this practice; he only declared that “ he believed the
“ new testament writings to contain a revelation worthy
“ of God to give, and of man to receive: and that it
“ should be his endeavor to recommend those teachings
“ to

Mr. Sykes's arguments, that the articles are calvinistic, may be admitted, because it has been proved ; but the practice of subscribing them in the arminian sense, can never be justified by any thing short of the explicit declaration of the same power that

“ to the people, in the sense in which he could from
 “ time to time understand them.” This would have been a case in point for Dr. Samuel Chandler to have given in his *Case of subscription to explanatory articles of faith, as a qualification for admission into the christian ministry*. (1748.) His adversary pressing inquired for any one instance of the kind among protestant dissenters ; but, for reasons which can now only be conjectured, Dr. Chandler did not produce this case, though he had himself assisted at the ordination, and was joined therein by some of the most learned and respectable of his brethren, Dr. Hunt, Mr. Thomas Mole, Mr. George Benson, Mr. Joseph Symmonds and Mr. Sendercock.* The requisition of confessions of faith from the candidates for the ministry, is now generally forborn by the rational dissenters, but with those of other denominations these impositions are retained ; though they directly strike at and subvert the first principles of a consistent protestant dissent, whatever may be the particular doctrinal opinions of the party that require them.

* From the information of an authentic manuscript, and of a friend now living, who was present at the time.—See also *A sermon occasioned by the death of Dr. Caleb Fleming in 1779*, by the Rev. John Palmer of Islington, pages 30, 31.

that imposes. The countenance which great names may have given to this duplicity, will only prove the greater necessity of the removal of such terms of admission into a christian church ; which, it were fervently to be wished, was as liberal in it's institutions, as in the general spirit of it's members ; and that it was, in deed as well as word, founded upon that rock, the holy scriptures, and regulated by the true spirit of our common master, that so it might endure, and be the ornament of ages.

Mr. Whiston, speaking of these two tracts of Mr. Sykes's, says, that he " twice endeavoured to wash a blackmore white." He then mentions that Dr. Clarke was resolved to subscribe no more ; and adds, " In
 " which honest resolution, I hope, this his
 " great admirer (Dr. Sykes) will follow
 " him, and timely repent of those two
 " pamphlets, which he formerly wrote to
 " encourage himself, and others of the
 " clergy, *to leave the paths of uprightness,*
 " *to walk in the ways of darkness* ; or, to
 " sign and use what they do not, they cannot
 " really believe to be true and right ; to
 " the great scandal of religion, the reproach
 " of

“ of that sacred function to which they be-
 “ long, and to the spreading of infidelity and
 “ profaneness in the world.—*O my soul, come*
 “ *not thou into their secrets! To their assembly,*
 “ *mine honour, be not thou united.*^q And again,
 “ in the *Memoirs* of his own life, he says,
 “ both Mr. Emlyn and myself, always,
 “ and Dr. Clarke and Mr. Jackson, after
 “ some time, have refused all preferments
 “ that require subscription.”^r

It will not be foreign to our present purpose to add, that in a letter, received so lately as in April 1782; a learned and aged friend, writes, in respect to the subject of the controversy between Dr. Waterland and Mr. Sykes, as follows; “ Mr. Whiston
 “ imagined this pamphlet (meaning Mr.
 “ Sykes's *Case*) had been written by his
 “ friend Jackson; upon this he very se-
 “ verely rebuked him as the supposed au-
 “ thor, but Jackson easily acquitted himself
 “ from the charge;”^s and adds, “ I was in-
 “ formed

^q *Historical memoirs* of Dr. Clarke, pages 118, 119.

^r Whiston's *Memoirs of his own life*. 2d edit. vol. i. p. 141.

^s This fact I have since found stated by Mr. Whiston himself, in his *Historical memoirs of Dr. Clarke*, pages 110,

“ formed by the late Dr. Foster, that Sykes,
 “ towards the latter part of his life, did
 “ not care to hear of the controversy with
 “ Waterland. Dr. Foster, I remember,
 “ observed that both Sykes and Water-
 “ land were upon an equal footing, both
 “ wrong.”

Nor does the learned author of the *Confessional* seem to think differently from Dr. Foster. The embarrassed and fluctuating casuistry of Dr. Waterland is fully canvassed by him ;^t and no less severe justice is done to the pleadings of Mr. Sykes in reply, in behalf of his avowed latitudinarian scheme of subscription.^u And it is most obvious to see, that there is the same uncertainty and embarrassment in the arian, as in the athanasian apologist ; and that these together form one of the many, very many, irrefragable

117 ; and in the *addenda*, p. 181 : and these passages are cited at length in the *Memoirs of Mr. Jackson*, printed in 1764, p. 68—79. Whence it appears, that Mr. Jackson had the same notion of subscription with Mr. Sykes, and designed to answer Dr. Waterland, but he afterwards gave it up, on the arguments of Mr. Whiston, Dr. Clarke, and Mr. Emlyn.

^t See *Confessional*. 3d. edit. p. 192—216.

^u *Ib.* p. 231—238.

irrefragable arguments for the taking away so great an hindrance to christian truth, liberty, and simplicity, as are all requisitions of assent to the doctrines and commandments of men.^w

Early in the year 1722, while Mr. Sykes was, as it were, yet defending himself against Dr. Waterland, he undertook the

^w The general cast of Dr. Sykes's writings seem to have been suspected, to say the least, even by a learned foreigner, as not being altogether agreeable to the established doctrines of the church of England. Dr. Cramer, chaplain to the king of Denmark at Copenhagen, while he was engaged in writing an "History of the protestant religion," sent a letter to Mr. Professor Hubner, in 1757, then in London, to desire he would procure some account of Dr. Sykes, and adds seven queries to direct his inquiries. The fifth query is worthy of notice. Query, "If he ever subscribed to the articles of the english church? And suppose he did, if he ever justified himself in that regard, his system of religion being vastly different from the ancient episcopal church?" Mr. Hubner applied to Dr. Birch, who was intimately acquainted with Dr. Sykes from 1730, to the time of his death. Dr. Birch's answer was no other than might be expected; that Dr. Sykes had subscribed the articles several times, viz. upon admission into every preferment he had; and for his justification therein referred the danish historian to his pamphlet, entitled, *The case of subscription to the xxxix articles, considered*. See Papers in Brit. Museum. Birch. MSS. 4319.—748.

the defence also of the quakers, whose cause then attracted the attention of the public. The state of their case at the time of Mr. Sykes's writing was as follows:—While a bill was depending in parliament “for granting the people called “*Quakers*, such forms of affirmation or “declaration, as may remove the difficulties which many of them lie under;” a petition was presented to the house of lords (January 17, 1721,) against the passing the said bill, entitled, “the humble petition of the clergy in and about London.” The reasons here alledged for the rejection of the bill, are, that the proposed indulgence would endanger the legal maintenance of the clergy by tythes, that it would be dispensing with oaths in the administration of justice; would give occasion of offence to good men, and of triumph to the enemies of christianity, to see such condescension made by a christian legislature to a set of men who renounce the divine institutions of Christ; and lastly, that the instances were rare wherein any quaker had refused the solemn affirmation prescribed in the 7th and 8th of William III.

The house of lords being of a somewhat more tolerant spirit than this select party of petitioners,—the petition, after some debate, was rejected; but it was afterwards countenanced by a protest signed by twenty lords, among whom, however, there were only Sir William Dawes, then archbishop of York, and Dr. Francis Atterbury, bishop of Rochester, from the episcopal bench. Upon the reading the bill the third time, January 19th, and it's passing the house that day, a second protest was entered, signed by thirteen lords, and among these the names of the archbishop of Canterbury, (Dr. Wake) and the bishop of Oxford (Dr. Potter) stood at the head; and the reasons were subscribed by only three other of their brethren, the archbishop of York, the bishop of Rochester, and Dr. Francis Gastrell, bishop of Chester. But this last protest, because of some high and false ascription of privilege to the house of convocation, was soon after erased by order of the lords.*

Thus

* Bishop Atterbury had thentofore written largely in support of the power of the convocation of the clergy, and was, at this same time, in the habit of writing pretty *high* protests: but archbishop Wake, before
his

Thus much being observed upon what passed in the house of lords upon the subject of this letter, and which is collected from the republication of the original papers, annexed to it, it may be full time to give the title at large. (XXV.) *A letter to Robert Mofs, Thomas Gooch, and the rest of the ministers, who in a late petition to the house of lords, stiled themselves, "the clergy in and about London."* By Joshua Freeman, (1722.) Mr. Sykes, assuming a feigned signature and the character of one of the friends, pleads their cause in the way of reply to the petition, and the two protests. He vindicates the relief they sought for, upon the justice of their case, and upon no injury whatever being likely by such indulgence to be sustained by the state. And

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his advancement to the prelacy, had been his adversary, and was supposed to think very little better of synods and convocations than the past history of these assemblies would justly warrant. Notwithstanding, however, this former diversity of sentiment we find his name at the head of this very protest, which was afterwards disgraced by an erasure from the journals of the house; a protest which though very consistent with the principles of bishop Francis Atterbury, was not easily to be reconciled to the principles of Dr. William Wake.

in confirmation of this latter argument, he recites the conduct of the republic of Holland, which gave to the anabaptists the like liberty which the quakers then asked and obtained of the parliament of great Britain.*

It is observed also, that the petition was, in truth, a very imperfect representation of the sentiments of the London clergy; and that it had been hastily, if not surreptitiously obtained. The names of those two gentlemen to whom the letter is addressed, owe their distinction, probably, to their extraordinary zeal, above others of their brethren, in soliciting and presenting the petition; they were two well known dignitaries of the church, but while our author was writing under the character of a quaker, the recital of their honours was necessarily omitted.

Mr. Sykes also published in the same year *A sermon*, preached at the chapel in King-street, near Golden-square, London, on the fifth of November 1722, being then, as we have before seen, morning preacher there. The title of this sermon is, (XXVI.) *The consequences of the present*

* See 8 George I. c. 6.

sent conspiracy to the church and state considered: (1722.) and the text is taken from the twentieth verse of the thirty-fifth psalm; *For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.* He does not omit to remark, though he forbears to examine critically, the two different versions which are given of the former part of the verse, for while some read, "they speak not peace," others have it, "they speak peace:" but contents himself with applying the subsequent part of the verse, (independent of either version of the former part) to the purpose he had in view, and to the men, whose principles he intended to describe, as "devising deceitful matters against those that were quiet in the land."

The policy of the church of Rome is stated to be uniformly, and in all things, "so contrived, that in it's natural consequences it supports a temporal greatness, at the same time that it pretends to support a kingdom which is not of this world."

The application, in respect to the circumstances of that time, which threatened

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the subversion of the government from plots and conspiracies by some of our disaffected countrymen, consists, in giving his hearers and readers full notice of the power, the arts, and the perfidy of the church of Rome; a church which was doubly armed with means to effect it's end, by that intimate alliance with the state, as to give it the ascendancy over the most sacred institutions of civil government. He enumerates some of the obvious and fatal consequences of a popish prince being seated on the throne of a protestant kingdom; fatal, from the depression of civil liberty by the tyranny of the prince supported upon popish principles; from the probable resentment of the disaffected, and the horrors of a civil war and massacre intended; and from the loss of that religious liberty, to which we are entitled as christians, as men, and as protestants.

Bishop Hoadly was translated in 1721, to Hereford, and in 1723 to the see of Salisbury; and he had not been settled there more than three months, before he collated Mr. Sykes to the prebend of Alton-Borealis in that cathedral. This act of merited friendship, in reward for the exertion

exertion of his abilities in the service of rational religion and liberty, and in return for the unwearied efforts of personal regard, Mr. Sykes received on January 26, 1723-4. And, about three years afterwards (1726,) it was followed by the same worthy and eminent prelate's appointment of him to the præcentorship in the same cathedral church, on the death of their common friend, the learned Dr. Daniel Whitby.

Upon the return of the anniversary meeting of the gentlemen educated at St. Paul's school, on Monday January 25th, 1724, Mr. Sykes preached the sermon on that occasion in St. Paul's cathedral. (XXVII.) It was afterwards published at the request of the stewards, "his honoured friends, and school fellows;" among these were Dr. Mawson, afterwards bishop of Ely, who had preached on the same occasion the preceding year; the reverend Samuel Grove, Richard Edwards, esq. and five others.

The subject of this discourse is taken from 1 Tim. i. 5, and 6. *Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart,*

heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. From which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling. And having explained the apostle's meaning as connected with it's context, he proceeds to "inquire into the natural sources of the evil condemned by the apostle in those words, *vain jangling*; to shew that a right education is the proper cure of it; and to consider what should be the conduct of such, as have had a liberal education, towards one another."

These several parts of his subject are accurately and judiciously treated, holding out just ideas of the advantages of a liberal education, and the proper uses which ought to be made of them, in the investigation of truth, as also in the government of temper in the inquiry after it; and in cultivating an enlarged charity for those who, after all, entertain a difference in opinion from ourselves.

CHAPTER III.

His appointment to the assistant preachership at St. James's ;—the publication of his "Essay on the truth of the christian religion ;" takes the degree of doctor in divinity at Cambridge ; publishes his "True grounds of the expectation of the Messiah ;" two assize sermons ; and his "Elogium of Dr. Clarke."

1725—1729.

ON the fourteenth of April 1725, upon the nomination of Dr. Samuel Clarke, Mr. Sykes was appointed assistant preacher at St. James's church, Westminster. The vacancy was occasioned by the death of Dr. Ibbot, who had been, sometime his contemporary at Benet College in Cambridge, though his senior by about six years ; and who, from a congenial turn of mind, and similar studies, had been connected with him in the most intimate friendship. ^a

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^a See some account of Dr. Ibbot in Masters's *History of C. C. C. C.* pages 317, 318 ; and Dr. Flexman's preface to Dr. Ibbot's *Thirty-six discourses*, in 2 vols. 8vo. 1776.

The high claims which had been made by the advocates for church authority throughout the reign of queen Anne, and till near the close of that of her successor, being now for awhile laid to sleep by the excellent replies which had been made to them, 'left the field of controversy open to the speculations of certain ingenious free-thinkers. And as civil establishments have been very clearly demonstrated to be one great cause of infidelity, it is the less to be wondered that the great pretensions which had been made in favour of the ecclesiastical system of doctrine and discipline established by law, should generate suspicions against the credibility of the christian revelation; or at least prepare a season wherein it's enemies could with advantage bring on a general attack upon it's authority. And further, as the viewing christianity through the medium of human devices, had occasioned not a few persons unhappily to reject it; so also these additions increased the difficulty of consistent defence to the members of national churches. Infomuch that while the assailants had the choice of their ground, ammunition, and the full exercise of their weapons, wherewith they could put forth all their

their strength: some of the most ingenious and able advocates of our common faith were left exposed to the artillery of the enemy, and obliged to make their defence under the pressure of fetters and links of iron.

Mr. Sykes was himself by no means insensible of this disadvantage, as may be presumed from the general tenor of his writings, which were directed to the removal of all such impediments; but which may also be concluded from his own express acknowledgment of the difficulties which they occasioned in the defence of the truth, as it in Jesus. “One thing more I would observe,” says he, “which both the friends and the adversaries of christianity know full well; and that is, that since divinity has been made a science, and systematical opinions have been received and embraced, in such a manner that it has not been safe to contradict them, the burden of vindicating christianity has been very much increased. It’s friends have been much embarrassed through fear of speaking against *local truths*; and it’s adversaries have so successfully attacked those weaknesses, that christianity itself has been deemed indefensible, when in reallity
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the follies of christians alone have been so. Whereas, were christians left to their full liberty to defend the doctrines of Christ and his apostles ; the doctrines, I say, of Christ and his apostles, which is all that christians, *as such*, are obliged to defend ; were no attacks to be made against them, but what could be taken from *thence* ; and were they to defend *only* them, I do not see which way their cause could receive any damage, nor how infidelity could make any converts".^b

In the year 1724, Mr. Collins first published his *Discourse on the grounds and reasons of the christian religion* ; " as if his
 " design had been" (as Dr. Leland says,) " to do real service to christianity, by establishing it upon a sure and solid foundation. The scheme he lays down is this :
 " that our Saviour and his apostles put the whole proof of christianity solely and entirely upon the prophecies of the old Testament: that if these proofs are valid, christianity is established upon it's true foundation ; but if they are invalid, and
 " the

^b Preface to *Essay on the truth of the christian religion*, p. x.

“ the arguments brought from thence be
 “ not conclusive, and the prophecies from
 “ thence not fulfilled, *christianity has no just*
 “ *foundation, and is therefore false.* Accord-
 “ ingly, he sets himself to shew, that the
 “ prophecies cited in the new Testament
 “ from the old, in proof of christianity,
 “ four or five of which he particularly confi-
 “ ders, are only typical and allegorical proofs;
 “ and that allegorical proofs are no proofs,
 “ according to *scholastic rules*, i. e. as he
 “ plainly intends it, according to the rules
 “ of sound reason and common sense. Thus
 “ it appeareth that the evident design of this
 “ author’s book is to shew, that the only
 “ foundation on which christianity is built
 “ is false : that the first publishers of the
 “ gospel laid the whole support and credit
 “ of Christ’s divine mission, and of the reli-
 “ gion he taught, upon pretended jewish
 “ prophecies, applied in a sense which had
 “ no foundation in the prophecies them-
 “ selves, and contrary to the plain original
 “ meaning and intention of those pro-
 “ phecies ; which the jews had never un-
 “ derstood nor applied in that sense, and
 “ which had nothing to support it but al-
 “ legory ;

“legory ; *i. e.* the mere fancy of him who
“applies it..”^c

After this general state of the scheme of Mr. Collins's book, it is almost needless to say that many learned men, both among the clergy of the established church, and the protestant dissenters, exerted themselves with great ability and success in reply. Among these were bishop Chandler, Mr. Samuel Chandler, doctors Sherlock and Bullock, and Mr. Whiston and Mr. Lowman, all of whom, while they defended the christian faith, accumulated credit to themselves. Nor was Mr. Sykes, upon this occasion, behind the foremost of these respected names in the service he rendered the christian cause, in his (XXVIII.) *Essay on the truth of the christian religion : wherein it's real foundation upon the old Testament is shewn.* This work was first published in 1725, and the great object of it was to bring “direct, positive proof of this truth, that Jesus is the Christ.”^d And the importance of the argument in it's favour, drawn

^c See Leland's *View of deistical writers*, edit. 4, 1764. vol. i. pages 90, 91.

^d *Preface* to the second edition. p. xi.

drawn from the prophecies of the old Testament, against which Mr. Collins had directed his main force, is well reasoned in a short compass. "There are," says he, "I know, a great many persons, who conceive that christianity is sufficiently proved to be true, if the miracles and resurrection of Jesus are true; even without any regard to the prophecies so often appealed to by him. But supposing the miracles to be true; yet no miracles can prove that which is false in itself to be true. If therefore the Messiah be not foretold in the old Testament, no miracles can prove Jesus to be the Messiah foretold: Nay, it is a stronger argument to prove Jesus to be an impostor, that he appealed to prophecies which were not prophecies, and by that means imposed upon the ignorant people; than it is, that he came from God merely because he worked miracles. *False Christs and false prophets may arise, and may shew such great signs and wonders as to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.* (Matt. xxiv. 24.) Yet no one from thence would argue, that those false Christs, are true ones; nor would any one

one conclude that a man came from God, notwithstanding any miracles he might do, if he appealed to scripture for that which is no where in it." ^c

In the beginning of this essay, Mr. Sykes distinctly considers the historical fact, and the grounds of it, "that the jews expected about the time that Jesus appeared, that some body from among them should obtain a kingdom and dominion over all:" and this he maintains from the evidences of the jewish and roman writers, (Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius,) and also the sacred writings of the old Testament, (chap. i. and ii.) He then proceeds to consider the several phrases of *the kingdom of heaven*,—*the kingdom of God*,—*the kingdom*,—*his kingdom*,—*kingdom of Messiah or Christ*, which severally occur in the new Testament, as meaning the spiritual kingdom, or state of the gospel, and as appeals to the prophecies in Daniel in respect to the time of it's commencement during the roman empire; it's progress and extent; (*becoming a mountain, and filling the whole earth. Dan. ii. 31—35.*) it's not being promoted

^c *Introduction to the second edition. pages i. ii.*

moted or carried on by human force, but *without hands*. (chap. iii. and iv.) He maintains also, in the prosecution of the argument, that wherever the title of *Son of man* is used in the new Testament, the prophecy of Daniel (vii. 13, and 14.) is in view; and that wherever Jesus is so called, how often soever that be, there the meaning is, that he is that person to whom the kingdom is prophesied to be given in Daniel. (chap. v.) With respect also to the title *Messiah* or *Christ*, in the new Testament, which was founded on more than one prophecy, he considers as highly probable to have a particular view to the prophecy in Daniel, (ix. 24—27.) which has immediate relation to the time when Jesus was *cut off*, as well as the name *Messiah*, by which he was called, and which in Daniel is put absolutely, *Messiah the prince*. (chap. vi.)

In the advancement of the argument he next insists, that, besides the appearance of Jesus before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the final end of the Jewish state, “he proved himself to be the Christ, or the Messiah, or the Son of man,”—“that per-

son whom Daniel saw, and to whom the kingdom was given: and this he proved by a series of miracles, by wonders and signs, which God did by him in the land of Judea." Nor does Mr. Sykes omit to refute some of Mr. Collins's reasoning on the credibility of miracles, before he proceeds to consider "the evidence there is for the miracles which Jesus did." The accounts of which, as he observes, are given on the testimony of those whose interest was on the contrary side; who were contemporaries, and two of the evangelists even eye witnesses of what they relate; all of whom were plain, illiterate men; free from policy or cunning; and whose writings shew them to be artless, simple, and ingenuous; the facts related were performed before great numbers of persons, and the accounts published soon after the death of Jesus; and their *end* was worthy of the agent to whom they are ascribed. (chap. vii. and viii.) He also states the evidences "of the resurrection of Jesus," and examines the objections against them, concluding that the fact is true, and consequently, that *Jesus* is the *Christ*. (chap. ix. and x.) He next proceeds

ceeds generally to the consideration “ of the prophecies of the new Testament, as an argument for the truth of christianity ;” and then “ of the meaning of types in the new Testament, and of typical reasoning,” in order to rescue several passages from misapprehension, whereby christianity is exposed to the common scorn of it’s adversaries. (chap. xi. and xii.) He afterwards goes on to support his general argument, by the particular examination “ of the meaning of those words used by the evangelists, — *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets.*” He explains, by the way, the various significations of the word *prophet*, and very ably refutes the notion of a double interpretation of the prophecies ; generally understanding the words, *that it might be fulfilled*, &c. to be used in the way of accommodation, and as applying them only. The several citations in the four gospels, and acts of the apostles, are successively examined in the order they lie in the new Testament ; and it is insisted, that where *real prophecies* are cited, they are not brought, nor intended as proofs of Jesus being the Christ, but as *marks* or

characters of the *Messiah*, which agreed to *Jesus*. (chap. xiii.—xv.)

Having now gone through the compass of his design, he adverts to one circumstance which may appear somewhat singular, which is, “that the prophecies which christians very usually insist on now a-days, are never mentioned in the new Testament; whereas others, which seem more remote and difficult to be understood, are therein often mentioned.” And this is very satisfactorily accounted for, particularly in respect to that concerning Shiloh, Daniel’s seventy weeks, and Haggai’s second temple, all of which were not completed ’till after all the books of the new Testament were written, excepting St. John’s gospel, and St. Jude’s epistle. (chap. xvi.)

The argument of the book is recapitulated in the three closing pages of this volume, which contain a noble protest in favour of the simple and genuine gospel of Christ: they do so much credit to our author’s discernment, and ingenuous temper, to his love for truth, and earnest desire to remove all impediments to the discovery of it; that it
would

would be to withhold an act of justice to him, and to deny a rational gratification to the liberal reader, not to recite them in this place.

“ I have,” says he, “ in the preceding chapters endeavoured to pursue one single thread of reasoning, omitting many other arguments which have their weight. But that the reader may perceive the connection of the whole, I here sum up the argument in a few words.

“ The Jews were, at and about the times when Jesus appeared, in great expectation of one, whom they called, the *Messiah*, and who was to have an universal dominion; and this expectation was founded upon their sacred books. There was a promise made to Abraham, and to David, that one should arise of David’s seed, who should reign for ever.

“ And in Daniel, there is express prophecy that God would erect a KINGDOM; and there is an account of *one* like *the Son of man*, to whom God is represented as giving an *everlasting dominion*, that *all people, nations, and languages, should serve him*: and likewise there is clear prophecy,

that in a certain period of time *Messiah* should *be cut off*.

“ Jesus, when he appeared, declared to the people, that God was, by means of him, erecting the kingdom of heaven foretold: that he was that *Son of man*, that *Messiah*, or *Christ*, whom they expected: and this he did, not once or twice, but some hundreds of times, during his life: in effect, every time that he discoursed of the kingdom of heaven, of the Son of man, or of the Christ, he appealed to these prophecies of Daniel.

“ To shew that he did not do this as an impostor, but as one really sent from God, he worked many miracles; he foretold his own death and resurrection; and he rose again just as he had foretold: which plainly proves that he was influenced by a power from on high. These facts being true; and the events exactly corresponding to the prophecies of Daniel; and, since our Saviour's times, events exactly corresponding to the prophecies of the new Testament, as we ourselves can see, and make a judgment upon seventeen hundred
years

years experience, it is undeniably certain, that christianity is true.

“ The only objections which have the appearance of weight in them, are taken from mistaken notions of some expressions in the new Testament writers, or else from a wrong judgment of the apostles methods of arguing. But they are absolutely nothing, if understood, as it must be allowed they MAY be ; and if there be but a *possibility* that they *may* be understood as I have explained them, the truth of christianity stands unshaken ; because the force of the arguments produced against it, lies intirely upon a supposition, that it is *impossible* to reconcile the old and new Testament together in those points.

“ Would to God that christians would be content with the plainness and simplicity of the gospel ! That they would be persuaded to make no other terms of communion, than what Jesus himself has made ! That they would not vend, under the name of evangelical truth, the absurd and contradictory schemes of ignorant, or wicked men ! That they would part with that load of rubbish which makes thinking

men almost sink under the weight, and gives too great a handle for infidelity ! That they would distinguish betwixt human opinions and revealed truths ! That they would see the difference betwixt authority and reason ! That they would look upon Jesus as the author and finisher of faith ! That they would think, that they are not qualified to make any other terms of acceptance with God, than what are already published by our Saviour ! That they would look upon all serious christians, as members of the one body of Christ ! That they would cease from unchristian and inhuman damning, persecuting, burning one another, for not assenting to the words of men, as to the words of God ! And CHRISTIANITY would soon become the joy of the whole earth, and *infidelity* would lose it's main, I may say, it's only support."

After this view of this *Essay on the truth of the christian religion*, more immediately before us, it must further be observed, that a *second edition, corrected and enlarged*, was published 1755, on account of the renewed attacks upon the christian religion, by lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Hume ; of the latter
of

of these, Dr. Sykes has taken some notice in an additional preface, in respect to his general argument against miracles.

The writer of the *New memoirs of literature* for August 1725, concludes his account of this work, soon after it's first publication, in the following manner;—

“ It seems to me,” says he, “ that the
“ author has done a great service to christi-
“ anity by publishing this book. I never
“ read any polemical work, written with
“ greater politeness : I have not found in it
“ any injurious term, any personal reflection.
“ If this book had not a very great sale, I
“ should wonder at it. If this book does
“ not appear sufficient to remove scruples
“ about the quotations of the first preach-
“ ers of the gospel, I know not what will
“ do it.

“ I shall observe, that this book cannot
“ be well answered, unless it be proved that
“ *Christ* was not foretold in the prophecies
“ of Daniel ; and that the evangelists and
“ apostles *did really believe* that all their ci-
“ tations related only to the person of *Jesus*,
“ or to his dispensation, and could not be
“ understood of any other person, or any
“ other thing. If those two articles are not
“ proved

“ proved with great evidence, an answer to
 “ Mr. Sykes’s book would be very in-
 “ significant.”^f

Dr. Leland says, that “ in this book, it
 “ is clearly proved, that there are some di-
 “ rect prophecies relating to the Messiah in
 “ the old Testament, especially in the book
 “ of Daniel ; and there are many good ob-
 “ servations to shew, that the new Testa-
 “ ment writers often quote passages by way
 “ of accommodation and allusion only ; and
 “ that most of the texts produced as prophe-
 “ cies by the author of *The grounds*, are of
 “ this kind.”^g Dr. Harwood speaks of this
Essay in similar terms of approbation.^h

And also a writer in one of our present
 literary journals, who is said to have been
 a gentleman very competent to make a just
 estimate of the work, of which he speaks, is
 led to observe, that “ the *Essay on the truth*
 “ *of the christian religion*, is, by far, the best
 “ book

^f *New memoirs of literature.* vol. ii. pages 102, 103.

^g See Leland’s *View of deistical writers.* 4th. edit.
 vol. i. p. 96.

^h See *New introduction to the new Testament.* second
 edit. vol. i. p. 289—291.

“book on that topic.”ⁱ And it was allowed by that able adversary against whom it was originally written, “to have advanced a
“consistent scheme of things.”^k

In the year 1726, Mr. Sykes proceeded to take the degree of doctor in divinity in the university of Cambridge.^l But I am not further informed in this matter, notwithstanding my several inquiries, than by what I received from an eminently learned and venerable dignitary, who, in a letter to me in January 1782, writes—“I know nothing particular of Dr. Sykes, save that I
“was in the schools when he kept his act
“for his doctor’s degree, where he stood,
“like the sturdy oak, to receive and return
“back the fiery darts of the orthodox. The
“questions I forget, but I think one was on
“the right of private judgment.” And the same much respected friend adds, in another letter of more recent date,—“his figure
“and

ⁱ See *Monthly review*, for May 1756. vol. xiv. p. 398.

^k See preface to the *second* edition of the *Essay*. p. xi.

^l From Benet college register.

“ and cool deportment on that occasion, I
 “ shall never forget.”

Mr. Collins published in 1727, A defence of his *Grounds and reasons*, under the title of *The scheme of literal prophecy considered*; this was chiefly in reply to bishop Chandler, though other adversaries were not wholly overlooked; but inasmuch as some of his suggestions concerning “ the expectation of the jews of a Messiah to come out of their own nation,” were thought deserving of further notice by Dr. Sykes, he published a letter upon the subject in the *London journal* of April 1, 1727, under the signature of *Philaletbes*.

Mr. Collins had acknowledged that there
 “ was in and about the time of Jesus a
 “ very great expectation among the jews of
 “ a person to come, who was to redeem them
 “ by arms out of the state of misery and
 “ slavery under which they groaned.” But
 at the same time he ventured to assert,
 that “ such expectation had no real foun-
 “ dation in the old Testament, and therefore
 “ could only proceed from the sense of the
 “ oppressions they were under; and the same
 “ reason,”

“reason,” says he, “holds for the continuance of that notion.”

The design of this letter therefore is to shew that the true grounds of such expectation are to be found *in antiquis sacerdotum libris*, where Tacitus tells us they were thought to be contained, *i. e.* in the old Testament.

This anonymous rescript being answered at the end of a letter addressed to Dr. Rogers, and more than probably written by Mr. Collins himself,^m wherein he shifted his foundation from the *distress* to the *enthusiasm* of the jews, in his explaining his account of the expectation of a Messiah. This artful change of the ground of attack, provoked Dr. Sykes to a vindication of his former letter in reply; and he has shewn from the history of the world, and also from the particular situation of the jews, that neither their supposed distress, nor yet their enthusiasm, were the real causes of their expectation, being both of them

^m The title at large, runs,—*A letter to the reverend doctor Rogers, on occasion of his eight sermons, concerning the necessity of divine revelation, and the preface prefixed to them. To which is added, a letter printed in the London journal, April 1, 1727; with an answer to the same. London, printed in the year 1727.*

them unequal to such effect. And in this second letter, Dr. Sykes ably considers the difficulty insisted upon by Mr. Collins, that “only upon an allegorical and traditional sense of the scriptures could the jews ground their expectations of a carnal or victorious Messiah.”

The former of these letters was republished, along with the second, in the same year, in one tract, entitled, (XXIX.) *The true grounds of the expectation of the Messiah. In two letters. The one printed in the London Journal; the other in vindication of it. Being a reply to the answer published at the end of a late letter to Dr. Rogers. By Philalethes. (1727.)* Dr. Leland very justly calls this “an ingenious pamphlet.”ⁿ And though the argument is more controversial than general, or a reply to an objection, rather than a regular defence of christianity; it certainly contributed it's full share to the just investigation of truth, though it failed to make a convert of Mr. Collins.

Near to the close of the same year, Dr. Sykes preached a sermon at the assizes held
at

ⁿ See Leland's *View of deistical writers*, vol. i. p. 99.

at Chelmsford in Essex, March 21, 1727-8. and it was afterwards published (XXX.) at the request of William Ashurst, esq. the high sheriff, and of the grand jury of the county. The subject of this discourse is, *The duty of love to God, and to our neighbours*; (Matt. xxii. 37—39.) and these duties are here treated in a manner which does justice to the importance and extent of the subject, and reflects honour and credit upon the preacher. He insists, with pointed emphasis, upon the unity of God, as well as upon the love, and obedience due unto him; and in the genuine spirit of mutual toleration under the gospel dispensation, he enlarges upon, and severely reprehends the “violations of these two great commandments, upon which the law and the prophets hang, upon which all religion depends; because,” says he, “idolatry and persecution have been (in flat contradiction to these commands of Christ) *established* throughout the christian world. And how small a part of it, even yet, has reformed itself from those errors? How small a part has forsaken idolatry? and how much smaller still is acquainted

acquainted with that religious liberty which all men have a right to?"—And he concludes with lamenting the general weak state of these principles in the lives of those who profess christianity; and exhorts those whom it concerns, to educate children in the fear of God, and love of mankind, and in the abhorrence of persecution; and to instruct them in the true notion of liberty and the rights of their fellow creatures; for then, says he, "are they rescued from darkness to light, from the power of error to the force of truth; and to encourage such designs, is to encourage what is most likely to be of perpetual advantage to the children, and an honour to the society of which they are members, and a benefit to the commonwealth in which they are to live."

At the succeeding summer assizes held for the same county at Brentwood, Aug. 8, 1728, our author again preached, on that occasion, and this his second sermon was also published at the request of the sheriff and grand jury. (XXXI.) His text was taken from 1 Sam. ii. 25. *If one man*
sin

sin against another, the judge shall judge him : but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him ? The design of the preacher

was to point out and distinguish the separate provinces of the law of nature, of christianity, and human laws ; and he observes, that “ in the state that is most perfect, (if reason be allowed to judge of such perfection,) the boundaries of divine and human laws will be most religiously observed.”

And again ; “ where true liberty abounds, a liberty to worship God according to conscience ; a liberty to judge for one’s self ; a liberty to enjoy in quiet the rights of conscience ; a liberty to speak one’s sentiments, where they interfere not with the civil rights of men ; a liberty in civil matters bounded only by the end of society, or the reasons for which society is founded.—

Where such a liberty as this is, there must be, if reason in theory will hold good in practice, the utmost perfection, and the utmost happiness ; and in consequence the nigher the approach is, the more desirable the society.” And lastly, in support of the observance of that distinction, he well remarks, “ there will not be so much danger of

confusion to a society, where the difference betwixt human and divine laws is strictly observed, as there is, where fallible men presume to make themselves judges over others in cases whose cognizance relates alone unto the Lord. And the reason is, the greatest cause of confusion is then removed : for liberty always produces charity, and charity will ever produce benevolence, and peace, and good neighbourhood, and sociableness, in which things the happiness of society consist. On the contrary, the instant men are put under unreasonable restraints, their passions are raised ; friendships are broken ; there is a constant ground for uneasiness laid ; and, hence have sprung most of those lasting sects which have torn christianity into pieces. The narrowness of some has been the cause of narrowness in others ; and where a contracted spirit on all sides reigns, the effects of it will soon appear in hardships and mutual provocations, and resentment ; and if opportunities arise, in injuries, and feuds, and contentions, and every disorder." °

Upon

• See Affize sermon at Brentwood, p. 25—27.

Upon the publication of the second edition of Dr. Whitby's "Last thoughts" in 1728, there was prefixed, (XXXII.) *A short account of the author, and a catalogue of his works.* This imperfect sketch was furnished by his successor in the præcentorship of Salisbury, Dr. Sykes. The account is chiefly taken from Wood's *Athenæ oxonienses*; and the same friend who ascribes to Dr. Sykes the catalogue of Dr. Whitby's works, has shewn me that it was open to some further additions.

The occasion which the death of Dr. Clarke in May 1729, afforded of paying the tribute of friendship and justice to his memory, was not overlooked by Dr. Sykes. Very soon after that event he published, in a periodical work of the time, entitled, "The present state of the republic of letters," for July 1729.^p (XXXIII.) *The elogium of the late truly learned, reverend, and pious Samuel Clarke, D.D.*—The eulogist, after stating Dr. Clarke's learned labours in his *Demonstration of the being and attributes of God*, in support of the proper

M 2

unity

^p See vol. iv. p. 53—69.

unity of God, against which “ had arisen no public adversaries of great consequence,” observes, that “ when that doctrine came to be applied by him to the *Scripture doctrine of the Trinity*,—this raised him numerous and open enemies;” and our author further adds, “ this must be owned in his favour, that he has so reconciled the texts of scripture, and so explained them, as to make the doctrine of the *trinity* intelligible to the meanest capacity.” The clearness and conclusiveness of Dr. Clarke’s learning and reasoning upon this subject, are here rather assumed than proved, and this is very observable in the event, as has been since proved by argument and criticism. Dr. Clarke has contributed very much indeed, nor has Mr. Hopkins done less in his *Appeal to the common sense of all christian people*, and his *Defence* of it, towards the progressive advancement of the belief of the divine unity in the plain and strict sense of those words; but both these truly learned, and truly valuable men, instead of making the *trinity* intelligible, have left their systems as much opposed by many positive and unequivocal texts, by the general scope and design

design of the new Testament, and by the principles of natural religion, as even the gross tritheism imputed to Athanasius ; [¶] and yet no more accommodating to the obvious letter and spirit of the established forms, than the systems of absolute unitarianism.

Nor does our author omit to mention Dr. Clarke's scruples about subscription. Dr. Clarke was certainly one of the most worthy and every way respectable ornaments of learning and true piety ; and his difficulties upon the account of subscription were great, and the source of much uneasiness to himself, as all his biographers have borne testimony : but the arguments used in defence of the practice of repeating subscription, by persons whose convictions lie contrary to the sense of the articles, and which are to be found in the *introduction* to the *scripture doctrine*,

M 3

are

[¶] See Dr. Priestley's small, but very valuable tract, entitled, *A general view of the arguments for the unity of God, and against the divinity and pre-existence of Christ, from reason, from the scriptures, and from history.* 12mo. 1783. Also the late Dr. Lardner's *Four discourses* on Phil. ii. 5. 1784. Dis. ii. p. 28--38.— See also Wakefield's *Enquiry*. vol. i. p. as cited in Maty's *Review* for August 1784 ; p. 106.

are futile in themselves, and fatal in their tendency and effect. If I were at liberty so to do, I could recite proofs from the ingenuous confession of some, who have been beguiled and misled by them. The same arguments, while they are supposed to prove the purpose for which they are adduced, would prove the lawfulness of subscription of assent, to any propositions which this or any other state might impose.

Dr. Sykes's short Elogium, and bishop Hoadly's Life of Dr. Clarke, which was first published 1730, occasioned Mr. Whiston to add his *Historical memoirs of the life of Dr. S. Clarke*, in the course of the same year, and which he styles *a supplement to those accounts*. Mr. Whiston was disposed to qualify panegyric; and being himself in nowise inclined to accommodate, he states his main exceptions to Dr. Clarke's perfection of character, in his pointed and unanswerable *observations* on the tendency of the *introduction* to the *Scripture doctrine*, and upon some things in the book itself, which regarded the justification of subscription. *

These

* See particularly p. 41—66. of *Hist. Memoirs*. And also *The Confessional*. 3d edit. p. 221—231.

These *Memoirs* were in their turn noticed in an anonymous pamphlet, called *Whiston-eutes, or Remarks, &c.* (1731.) written with an affectation of humour; but no material information was given to the world by the memorialist, or his answerer, in the way of confuting any thing that had been said by Dr. Sykes, which is all that we are now concerned with. Additional anecdotes were indeed given of Dr. Clarke, who was one of those, of whom too much cannot be said; and in whose life, every good man must feel himself interested.—A third edition of Mr. Whiston's *Memoirs* was published 1748, to which Dr. Sykes's *Elogium*, and Mr. Emlyn's *Memoirs*, were annexed in an appendix. Soon after which there followed some *Observations* upon it, which I have been informed hurt Mr. Whiston in his old age, containing a vindication of Dr. Clarke's conduct and behaviour at the time the convocation fell upon him, from the unjust aspersions cast upon him by Mr. Whiston and others; and from the weak objections made to his conduct by some of his friends, 1748.

C H A P T E R IV.

Dr. Sykes's controversy with Dr. Waterland, in consequence of Dr. Clarke's "Exposition of the church catechism," and concerning the difference between moral and positive duties; his controversy with Mr. Whiston, Mr. Chapman, and others, concerning the eclipse mentioned by Phlegon; two tracts relating to Dr. Rundle's being refused the bishopric of Gloucester; and other two on the reasonableness of repealing the corporation and test acts, and their non-importance to the church of England: his "Inquiry into the meaning of the demoniacs in the new Testament," and controversy with Mr. Whiston, Mr. Twells, and others in consequence of it, 1730—1737.

THE truly learned and excellent Dr. Samuel Clarke, who died in the month of May 1729, had, "during the time of his
 "being rector of St. James's, besides the
 "regular performance of all the other offices
 "of his profession, followed the custom of
 "his

“ his predecessors, in reading lectures upon
 “ the church catechism, every Thursday
 “ morning, for some months in the year.
 “ In the latter part of his time, he revised
 “ these with great care; and left them, un-
 “ der the title of, *An exposition* upon that
 “ catechism, completely prepared for the
 “ press. This exposition was published, ac-
 “ cording to his own express desire, the same
 “ year of his death. The *Remarks* of a
 “ learned man,” says bishop Hoadly, “ fol-
 “ lowed it as soon as it could well be read
 “ in the world. An *Answer* has been made
 “ to these *Remarks*, and the world must
 “ judge on which side truth and light
 “ appear.” ^a

The *Remarks* upon Dr. Clarke's expo-
 sition of the church catechism, were writ-
 ten by Dr. Daniel Waterland: and they
 appear to be the effusions of a captious and
 impatient adversary, more attached to the
 defence of the notions of an established
 theological system, than to that fair and
 candid reasoning which so well become the
 inquirers

^a See bishop Hoadly's Account of Dr. Clarke, in
 the *preface* to the edition of his works in folio.
 1738, p. viii.

inquirers after, and advocates of truth, and to which the very name of Dr. Clarke was justly entitled. Dr. Sykes, who had been many years united with him in general sentiment, and personal friendship; and during the four last years of his life had been his colleague, in the duties of the ministry, in the church of St. James's, was, from the influence of these impressions, and from an ardent desire to draw aside that veil, which others were eager to throw over every liberal inquiry into scripture truth, readily induced to examine these remarks on the catechitical lectures of Dr. Clarke in (XXXIV.) *An answer to the remarks upon Dr. Clarke's exposition of the church catechism.*^b (1730.) The variety

^b In one of the closing tracts in this controversy, Dr. Sykes vindicates the independence of his own mind, while he bears a generous and affectionate testimony to his value for his friend.—“As to Dr. Clarke's exposition,” says he, “that was what I undertook to vindicate from the objections of this author, and not every thing that Dr. Clarke ever said or printed. During the time that I had the honour of a particular intimacy with that truly great man, I differed from him in some matters; nor should I think that his acquaintance,

riety of matter which was the subject of investigation in this first stage of the controversy, principally respected the following topics: idol-worship; worship of the Father only; the supposed dropping or omission of part of the catechism; the interpretation of church forms; rule for fundamentals; of the ancients; of creeds; the apostle's creed; divinity of the holy ghost; the Father the only God; mother of God; form of baptism; satisfaction; and the Lord's supper.

Besides Dr. Sykes, there was also an anonymous writer against the *Remarks*, who addressed *A letter to the reverend Dr. Waterland*, 1730; which though by no means unworthy of notice, was a performance very inferior to the *Answer* which we have just mentioned.

Dr. Waterland presently replied to Dr. Sykes, but, whether from a suspicion of any particular weakness in his argument, or from the importance of the doctrine, he
 quittance, or any man's else, was worth having, if the hard condition of having it must be, a breach of friendship ever to differ in sentiments." *True foundations*, &c. p. 96.

he took his stand on more limitted ground, though ultimately as indefensible as the out-works which he had deserted. He entitled his piece, *The nature, obligation, and efficacy of the sacraments considered; wherein the nature and value of positive institutions is more particularly examined, and objections answered.* (1730.) This pamphlet treated of only one article out of fourteen, which composed the *Answer*, and “instead of having *that* point cleared, and instead of giving that satisfaction in it which the author proposed, ’twas by words and art covered with darkness that might even be felt.”^c

The variety of objections which had been originally made in the *Remarks* upon Dr. Clarke’s exposition, were now left by Dr. Waterland to sleep, save the single question dependent upon the statement of the difference between moral and positive duties. To this therefore Dr. Sykes particularly replied, with all the expedition of a disputant ready equipped, in (XXXV.) *A defence of Answer to the Remarks, wherein such difference is fully stated.* (1730.)

Dr. Clarke

^c See *Defence of the answer*, &c. p. 5.

Dr. Clarke had asserted “ that the sa-
 “ crament of the Lord’s supper, and all other
 “ positive institutions had the nature only of
 “ means to an end, and that therefore they
 “ were never to be compared with moral vir-
 “ tues, nor can ever be of any use or benefit
 “ without them, nor can be in any degree
 “ equivalent for the want of them.” ^d

This assertion was opposed by the re-
 marker, who maintained that the sacra-
 ments were not only means, “ but ad-
 “ ditional improvements upon virtue: that
 “ they supply where moral virtues fall short:
 “ they relieve where the other cannot: they
 “ finish what the other begins, our justifica-
 “ tion and salvation.”—and again; “ moral
 “ virtues are rather to be considered as a
 “ means to an end, because they are previous
 “ qualifications for the sacraments, and have
 “ no proper efficacy towards procuring sal-
 “ vation ’till they are improved, and rendered
 “ acceptable by these christian performances.
 “ By moral virtues we shall never ordinarily
 “ come to Christ, nor at heaven, nor to the
 “ presence of God: but, by the help of the
 “ sacraments superadded, to crown and finish
 “ the

^d *Exposition, &c.* pages 281, 282.

“ the other, we may arrive at christian perfection.”

The subject being thus confined by Dr. Waterland, our author, in his *Defence*, enters on a definition of the terms, “ moral virtue, moral and positive duties, and obligation ;” and severally apporions to each their precedence and extent. He insists upon the higher obligation to the observance of moral duties, before positive ones, as the language of revelation as well as of nature ; the latter being only as the means to the former, and oftentimes dispensed with in both the old and new Testaments, where they are enjoined. And in an appendix he very judiciously removes the charge, brought by the remarker, of the imagined advantage given to the deists by *this* distinction between moral and positive duties.

Dr. Waterland again continued the controversy, in *A supplement* to his former *treatise, on the nature, obligation, and efficacy of the christian sacraments*. (1730.) In this tract he says, “ because the author of the *Defence of the answer to the remarks*,
“ seems

“ seems to be the leading man, I shall
 “ choose to continue the debate directly
 “ with him, and by the way only with the
 “ rest.” ^f There should seem to be some
 faint glimmerings of personal respect in
 this mention of his adversary at the out-
 set, but it is abundantly qualified by am-
 ple deductions before we reach the clos-
 ing pages. Dr. Waterland, however, sup-
 pressed the first effusions of his displeasure;
 for I have now before me that copy of Dr.
 Sykes’s *Defence* which was the property of
 Dr. Waterland; it is greatly enriched with
 his manuscript notes in the margin, writ-
 ten previous to his proceeding formally to
 arrange and compose his *Supplement*. These
 notes are loaded with the most petulant and
 contemptuous abuse and invective. A mo-
 derate assortment would more than justify
 the observation. At the same time it must
 be observed, that they are wholly omitted in
 the exhibition which the doctor made in
 his *Supplement*, which at least bespeaks
 the pre-eminence of his better judgment,
 when a little time had cooled his first re-
 sentment,

^f See *The Supplement*, &c. p. 2.

sentment, and the printer's types were to perpetuate the scratches of his pen.

The year 1730 afforded yet further matter in this dispute, from the productive and ready flowing pen of Dr. Sykes, in his reply to Dr. Waterland's *Supplement*, and which was entitled, (XXXVI.) *The true foundations of natural and revealed religion asserted.*

Dr. Waterland had in his *Supplement* deserted the first of the three points which arose out of the ONE *article of error* reserved for discussion, out of the fourteen in his original *Remarks*; viz. "that the sacraments are additional improvements upon virtuous practices." The second and third points, "that there is a salutary life-giving virtue annexed to the sacrament of the Lord's supper;" and "that moral virtues are rather to be considered as means to an end, than the sacraments themselves," were indeed further examined. And these depending upon the authority of scripture, scripture authorities were expected; but Dr. Waterland forbore to recite any. The sacraments being positive institutions, it was necessary to recur to them, in order to
judge

judge of their original design ; but he chose to introduce the authorities of Vossius, Gerhard, Hooker, and Dr. Clarke ; as though his opponents were to be determined by the authority of man, in a case which can only be determined by the word of God. §

As Dr. Waterland had marshalled his arguments in his *Supplement* into one-and-twenty sections, or, as he styles them, “ articles of error,” Dr. Sykes replies to them separately, under a similar division, declaring in his conclusion, that “ he had seen no reason to alter his sentiments in any one of them.” But he has made a more formal protest in answer to the question put by Dr. Waterland, “ what will not that author admit ?” To which he gives this answer, which though somewhat in the way of digression from argument, was declarative of his own mind, and not wholly undeserved by Dr. Waterland : “ I will not admit,” says he, “ that the author of *Scripture vindicated*, has vindicated the scripture against his adversary. Nay, I am so far from admitting this, that I really

N

and

§ See *True foundations*, &c. pages 3, 4

and sincerely think, that had he designed to have betrayed the scripture, under the mask of vindicating it, he would have wrote just such a book as that is. I will not admit, that any skill or common judgment in critique there appears, or that he has better explained the texts in Genesis, than the meanest Dutch commentator I ever looked into. I will not admit, that the very principles of morality are understood by this author; for if they had, he could not possibly have argued as he has either in that book, or this. I will not admit, that in any one single piece of this writer's that I have seen, good manners, or modesty, or skill in philosophy, or true metaphysic, or true reasoning appears; or that any thing else is more flagrant than his personal abuses, contempt of his adversaries, insolence, self-sufficiency, and a dogmatical pronouncing, *tanquam é cathedrá*, of what he thinks must be instantly submitted to. In the present controversy, I will not admit, that he has made good one charge out of fourteen brought against Dr. Clarke; no, nor one out of the one-and-twenty pretended articles exhibited against

gainst me. These are some things that I will not admit." ^h

About the time of the publication of Dr. Sykes's last pamphlet, Mr. Chubb also published his *Reflections upon the comparative excellency and usefulness of moral and positive duties.* ⁱ This, together with Dr. Sykes's *True foundations*, were jointly noticed, particularly the latter, in an anonymous tract, ably written, entitled, *An essay on moral obligation: with a view towards settling the controversy concerning moral and positive duties.* (Cambridge. 1731.)

N 2

This

^h See *True foundations*, &c. pages, 85, 86.—The article of Dr. Waterland in the new edition (1784.) of the *General biographical dictionary*, quaintly closes with this significant sentence,---“his works are not now read:” which, though it reflects no honour upon Dr. Waterland, does, in general, no great discredit to discernment of the present age.

ⁱ See the life of Mr. Chubb in the third volume of the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, by Dr. Kippis; where the liberal and candid pen of that valuable writer, has stated Mr. Chubb's concern in, and sentiment upon this question; (p. 523.) and rescued the reputation and supposed tendency of his *early* writings from the imputation of being intentionally hostile to the christian revelation.

This was generally ascribed to Dr. Waterland's learned fellow-collegian Mr. Thomas Johnson, fellow of Magdalen college in Cambridge, and one of the editors of the edition of Robert Stephens's *Thesaurus linguæ latinæ*, in 1734. Dr. Waterland's *Supplement*, and Mr. Johnson's *Essay*, were both answered in *An impartial review of the controversy concerning the comparative excellence, &c. of moral duties.* (1731.) which, at the time, was supposed to be written by Mr. Nicholls, then fellow of Clare hall, in Cambridge.

Dr. Waterland further defended himself in *A postscript to the second part of Scripture vindicated.* And to this Dr. Sykes also wrote (XXXVII.) *An answer; wherein is shewn, that if reason be not a sufficient guide in matters of religion; the bulk of mankind, for four thousand years, had no sufficient guide at all in matters of religion.* (1731.) The design and scope of this answer was to vindicate his former arguments from the imputations of "depreciating the use of revelation," which had been ungenerously brought against them by Dr. Waterland. And, in a few of the concluding pages,
Dr.

Dr. Sykes considers Dr. Stebbing's insinuation, that "he had lost all regard for the scriptures," as a personal injury; and insists that such treatment rather required the acknowledgment of mistake from the calumniators, than any defence from the aggrieved party. And in this he judged rightly. For to charge a man with infidelity, because he sees the justice as well as the goodness of God, in the dignity of human nature, and will exercise his own reason in the interpretation of the revealed word of God, is not only to play with firebrands and death, and to say, am not I in sport? but it is to endeavour to remove one good ground of defence of the attributes of God, and to destroy the just and proper medium, through which alone we can attain a right knowledge of the scriptures.

The controversy with Dr. Waterland, on the comparative excellence of moral and positive duties, was scarcely closed, before Dr. Sykes was engaged in another with Messrs. Whiston, Chapman, and Douglass, on the eclipse which happened at our Saviour's passion.

The occasion which gave rise to it, is fully and faithfully stated by Dr. Sykes in his introduction to the first dissertation on the subject, and it should seem no more than a necessary piece of information to lay that account before the reader.

Dr. Clarke having begun, a little before his death, to revise and correct his sermons, preached at the honourable Mr. Boyle's lecture, against a new edition should be wanted; Dr. Sykes, amongst some other things, which on that occasion he suggested to him, told him, that he apprehended the eclipse mentioned by Phlegon, had no relation to the darkness at our Saviour's passion; and that it ought not to be cited for the purpose, for which he, (as Grotius and others before him,) had cited it. The reasons he then gave were such as made him strike out that passage; and his book having then appeared without that citation or testimony, Dr. Sykes thought himself obliged to lay before the world, the reasons that first induced himself, and afterwards Dr. Clarke, to think that Phlegon's eclipse was not the same with that preternatural darkness at the death of Christ.

Dr.

Dr. Sykes considered himself the more obliged to this, because Mr. Whiston, in his *Historical memoirs of Dr. Clarke*, (p. 148.) had in so remarkable a manner mentioned this affair. With respect to the tendency of such an inquiry, there might possibly be some men who seriously thought, and others who pretended to think, that it might do some harm, at a time when christianity was so openly attacked; since it weakened at least, if not entirely set aside a testimony, which has often been urged by men of name in the learned world, in it's behalf. But he could not help thinking, that it was doing a real service to the cause of Christ, to guard against such testimonies as cannot possibly be *proved* to relate to it. Christianity never gained ground by such sort of evidence; nor ever will. The chief strength of a just vindication of christianity lies in the arguments which may be urged from prophecy in the old and new Testament, and in the evidence that can be produced from the miracles done by Jesus and his apostles; in shewing, that nothing in it is unworthy of God to reveal, or unworthy of a rational agent to receive; that it contains

all proper motives to encourage virtue ; and that the person who came, and laid these motives before the world was actually sent from God. When these points were proved, (and sure he was that it could not be objected to him that he had not endeavoured to prove them.) When these points were proved, said he, the addition of very disputable, if not totally impertinent, testimonies, does but weaken the evidence ; it never can possibly add any force to what is urged for the truth of christianity. ^k

The title of Dr. Sykes's first piece upon this subject, is fully descriptive of the purpose it had in view. (XXXVIII.) *A dissertation on the eclipse mentioned by Phlegon. Or, an inquiry whether that eclipse had any relation to the darkness which happened at our Saviour's passion.* (1732.) This publication was owing to the foregoing circumstances, and the vindication of the design rests upon the reasoning justly on the nature of that evidence by which the christian revelation is, and can alone be supported.

After

^h See Introduction to a *Dissertation on the eclipse, &c.* and the same reasons further supported in the preface to the *Defence of the dissertation.*

After stating the accounts given by the three evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who mention the darkness at the crucifixion of our Lord, it is observed, that “whatever it was, and from what cause soever it proceeded, ’tis certain it could not proceed from any natural eclipse of the sun; not only because this fact happened at the passover, *i. e.* at or about the full moon, when there can be no solar eclipse; but likewise, because this darkness continued nigh, if not full, three hours; whereas the longest solar eclipse possible cannot produce any very great darkness much above twice three minutes.”¹

In answer to the question, why this extraordinary event is not mentioned by any other than christian writers? the authority of Phlegon, (who was the emperor Adrian’s freedman) is produced as quoted in Eusebius. “*In the fourth year of the 202d olympiad, there was an eclipse of the sun, the greatest of any known before that time. ’Twas (as dark as) night at the sixth hour of the day, so as that the stars appeared in heaven. And a great earthquake in Bithynia*”

¹ See *Dissertation*, p. 8.

nia overturned a great many houses in the city of Nice.”^m

The subsequent inquiry therefore is to prove, that the darkness at our Saviour's passion, and the eclipse mentioned by Phlegon, were two distinct and separate events. And to this end Dr. Sykes argued, that Phlegon speaks of a fact which happened in the *first* year of the 202d olympiad, whereas Christ suffered in the *fourth* year of the same period. And that Phlegon meant a real natural eclipse.

In the investigation of this matter, Dr. Sykes examines this passage as it stands quoted, or is alluded to, by the writers of the first six centuries after Christ, as well to ascertain the true reading of Phlegon, as whether it related to the darkness at our Saviour's death.ⁿ For this purpose he critically examines all that is said concerning it, by Julius Africanus, Syncellus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Tertullian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Jerom, Philoponus, and Dionysius the Areopagite : and also what can be produced from the histories of China in relation to this darkness at the death of Christ.^o

It

^m See *Dissertation*, pages 9, 10.

ⁿ Ibid. p. 11.

^o Ibid. p. 11—96.

It would certainly be tedious to enter here into the evidence circumstantially, and probably the recapitulation of it may be spared also, which, nevertheless, is well preserved in the conclusion of this tract, and comprised in the compass of about five pages.

In the same year with the publication of Dr. Sykes *Dissertation*, appeared Mr. Whiston's *Vindication of the testimony of Phlegon; or, an account of the great darkness and earthquake at our Saviour's passion described by Phlegon. Including all the testimonies both heathen and christian, in the very words of the original authors, during the first six centuries of christianity. With proper observations on those testimonies.* (1732.)—Mr. Whiston here, agreeably to his engagement in the title, produces his several testimonies, twenty-six in number, and subjoins apparently dispassionate “observations from them;” and concludes with a short recapitulation of his judgment on the supposed alteration of the manuscript of Eusebius; and announces, that it “remained to him a very difficult “problem, how that great and judicious “person,

“ person, Dr. Clarke, should so easily be
 “ persuaded to give up Phlegon’s testimony,
 “ upon the producing of Kepler’s hypo-
 “ thesis.”^p It is however singular, and
 may deserve to be remarked, that though
 Mr. Whiston confessedly writ his Vindica-
 tion of Phlegon’s testimony in answer to
 Dr. Sykes’s Dissertation ;^q and which Dis-
 sertation was published in consequence of
 what Mr. Whiston had said in his *Historical*
memoirs of Dr. Clarke,^r he never mentions
 the name of Dr. Sykes, or even indirectly
 refers to him, observing only generally, that
 such testimony “ had been very lately called
 “ in question, and endeavoured to be dis-
 “ proved.”^s

This vindication of Phlegon by Mr.
 Whiston, was soon replied to by Dr. Sykes
 in (XXXIX.) *A Defence of the Disserta-*
tion, &c. wherein Mr. Whiston’s Observa-
tions

^p See Whiston’s *Testimony of Phlegon vindicated*, p. 49.

^q See in the *Defence*, p. 2, citation from the adver-
 tisements.

^r See the *Preface* to the *Defence* ; as also the *Introduc-*
tion to the *Dissertation*.

^s See Whiston’s *Testimony of Phlegon vindicated*, p. 3.

tions are particularly considered. (1733.) He observes indeed, that “ Mr. Whiston had not confuted one argument which he had urged in the *Dissertation* ; that he had not compared together what different authors had said, in order to fix the *year* in which Phlegon’s eclipse happened ; that he had not inquired into the differences of the witnesses, nor attempted to reconcile them ; nor entered into the probabilities of the account, or what should occasion such differences ; that he had produced no instance of a similar manner of expression in any heathen writer whatever, where an *extraordinary darkness* was called *an eclipse of the sun* ; no account of the universal silence in Greek and Latin writers of that time about so remarkable an event ; in short, he had done no one thing to remove or explain any one difficulty proposed. The book, therefore, neither removing any difficulties, nor proving what ought to have been expected from it, viz. that Phlegon *had described the great darkness and earthquake at our Saviour’s passion*, he resolved at first to have left this matter entirely to the reader as it stood, and not to have given himself

himself the trouble of taking any notice of it ; nor should he have altered his mind, had not a gentleman, (to whom he was a perfect stranger,) obliged him with a much more exact calculation of the eclipse in debate, than that which he had published from Mr. Whiston's authority."*

To this first and unexpected information Dr. Sykes received a second, from a gentleman of unquestionable skill in astronomical computations, which varied from the former but a few minutes ; and afterwards he consulted the great Dr. Halley, all of whom agreed in the correction of Mr. Whiston's mistake. And further, Dr. Sykes very properly objects against seventeen of Mr. Whiston's testimonies, as neither directly nor indirectly mentioning Phlegon, or his testimony ; to others, as not being original testimonies ; and to some, as not being authentic ; he objects also to the inconsistency of Phlegon's account with his reputed exactness. He then proceeds to examine and refute the separate testimonies of the patriarch Levi ; Africanus, Origen, Philoponus, and Tertullian.

The

* See the *Defence*, &c. pages 2, 3.

This *Defence* of the *Dissertation* roused Mr. Whiston to return to the charge the following year, when he published *A reply to Dr. Sykes's Defence of his dissertation, &c.* in the *third* of his *six dissertations*. (1734.)

Mr. Whiston has here enlarged his astronomical calculations, and proceeded to support the credit and importance of the evidence he had before produced; but his prosecution of the question, it is presumed, fails to produce that general conviction which his perseverance and zeal led him to expect.

There had appeared the preceding year an anonymous publication entitled, *Phlegon's Testimony shewn to relate to the darkness which happened at our Saviour's passion. In a letter to Dr. Sykes.* (Oxford, 1733.) which has been said to have been written by Mr. Douglass. In aid of Mr. Whiston, appeared also Mr. Chapman, who was then fellow of King's college in Cambridge, in, *Phlegon examined critically and impartially. In answer to the late dissertation and defence of Dr. Sykes.* (Camb. 1734.) Both these gentlemen display much learning in their examination of the question,

tion, and great respect for Dr. Sykes, bearing their testimony to his candor, ingenuity, and ability; they consider the subject of inquiry in it's just light, as an historical fact, in which no one has any interest, but to discover the truth.

In (XL.) *A second defence of the dissertation upon the eclipse mentioned by Phlegon*, (1734.) Dr. Sykes took his leave of the controversy; wherein Mr. Chapman's objections, and those of the author of the letter to Dr. Sykes, are particularly considered; and Mr. Whiston not wholly overlooked. Our author conducted himself through this dispute with his usual candor, without partiality or passion; but when he left the debate, he was by no means satisfied that the eclipse mentioned by Phlegon, had any reference to that supernatural darkness which happened at our Saviour's death. His concluding words are: "and now that I have reviewed this subject with all the indifference that a fair searcher after truth ought to have, I must own I see no evidence for the fourth year of olympiad 202, but what is owing to Eusebius alone; and which cannot, I think, be looked upon as satisfactory.

satisfactory. Could better have been produced, those ingenious and learned gentlemen, Mr. Chapman, and he that addressed a letter to me from Oxford, would certainly have produced it; nor could Mr. Whiston have failed, after so much pains taken by him upon this subject."

Mr. Chapman replied to Dr. Sykes's farewell tract, entitling his second piece, *Phlegon re-examined: in answer to Dr. Sykes's second defence of his dissertation concerning Phlegon*. (Camb. 1735.) In which he observes, that Dr. Sykes's second defence is drawn up in so mild and courteous a stile, that no adversary, he was persuaded, had reason to be displeased with it; and for himself, he assured him, he had his best and public acknowledgments. He presumes however, that Dr. Sykes was become more than half a convert to the agreement of Phlegon's testimony with the darkness at the crucifixion of Christ. But for this, he had no other foundation than what he calls Dr. Sykes's express civilities and compliments to himself, and *tacit* concessions and compliances. While on the other hand, should be considered, Dr. Sykes's

final declaration of his mind upon the subject, which if it should be thought to indicate any abatement in the evidence first adduced, peremptorily declares his dissatisfaction with it, upon the whole.

No sooner had Dr. Sykes relinquished the further pursuit of the foregoing controversy, than his thoughts and pen were employed in an affair which greatly occupied the public attention; and as it was then transacting under the auspices of great names, was highly deserving of public investigation and reprehension. The recommendations of Dr. Gibson, bishop of London, were, at this time, most attended to in the disposal of the more considerable preferments of the church which were in the patronage of the crown; and more especially in the case of bishoprics, where the party preferred was immediately called upon to act his part in a political and legislative character, as well as that of one of the heads of an ecclesiastical society. The see of Gloucester becoming vacant, the lord chancellor Talbot recommended Dr. Rundle, who had lived many years with his father,

father, the bishop of Durham, ^u to be appointed to that bishopric: but the bishop of London strenuously objected to this recommendation, upon the pretence that Dr. Rundle was not a “proper man.” Now, the test of fitness and propriety for advancement to the episcopal bench, is different in the estimation of different persons. With this good and learned prelate, for such he was in many respects, an attachment to and zeal for the established system of religious doctrines, and ecclesiastical power and discipline, were among the essential requisites for so high an appointment. And these, it seems, were suspected to make no part of the character of Dr. Rundle, “who” as Mr. Whiston writes, “was no athanasian, but “once a zealous promoter of primitive “christianity, upon the foot of the apostolical constitutions, ’till the usual corrupter of clergymen, the prospect of “preferment, diverted him another way.” ^w If however it is true, that the prospect of preferment had led him to temporize

O 2

against

^u See *The Reasons*, &c. p. 29.

^w See Whiston's *Memoirs*, vol i. p. 218; and also p. 229---235. of the same volume, for his further account of Dr. Rundle.

against the convictions of his conscience, the disappointment he might feel in the loss of a bishopric is the less to be lamented, as far as he was personally concerned.

The opposition to Dr. Rundle's promotion was productive of several pamphlets; for while it was considered as a measure of necessary prudence and precaution by some, it was by others thought an act of oppression and intolerance. Dr. Rundle, in his failing to obtain the english bishopric, was sacrificed to the interest of bishop Gibson, but he was the next year (1735.) made bishop of Derry in Ireland: and the opposition which was made to his promotion on this side the water, finally ended in the loss of the bishop of London's influence at court, and of all expectation of the archbishopric of Canterbury, to which he had, for some time before, been considered as heir apparent.

The first tract in this business was written by Dr. Sykes, and published 1734, entitled, (XLI.) *The reasons alledged against Dr. Rundle's promotion to the see of Gloucester, seriously and dispassionately considered. In a letter*

letter to a member of parliament for the county of —. By a gentleman of the Temple. A second impression was called for in the course of a few weeks. In this piece, independent of a general defence of Dr. Rundle, much was said, with great force, against that intolerant spirit which has not unfrequently shewn itself in great churchmen, of proscribing certain persons, of however great learning, ability, integrity, and amiable manners, because they have dared to examine for themselves, and have endeavoured to excite others to do the same; and because while they have lamented over the miserable state of an established parliamentary church, supported by human policy and human penalties, have presumed to wish and pray, that certain scandals might be removed, and made to give way to the advancement of that religion which came from above, in all purity and meekness. *

O 3

And

* The reflections in the text are, in general, justified by the observations of a distinguished prelate, who is now a living ornament of his bench; whose undaunted spirit in the conduct of what he conceives to be right, and his moderation in respect to others, equally reflect honour on his name. “The moderation,”

And while these reflections were in the mind of the writer, it was impossible for him not to spare some attention to the system of church politics, formerly supported by the bishop of London, the one great enemy of Dr. Rundle, in his *Codex juris ecclesiastici anglicani*: a work, which while it exhibits much learning as a civilian and ecclesiastic, forms an assortment of heavy artillery against the civil liberties of this country. The tendency of which, however, was about this time thoroughly exposed, and it's principles overthrown, by that eminent constitutional lawyer,

tion," says he, "of the present age in ecclesiastical matters is great, when contrasted with the violence of the last; all sides have reasons to rejoice at the difference: and I would have wished, that the hand which has written this letter, had been chilled with the damp of death before it had begun it's work, if I had thought, that the business which is now broached was likely, either in itself, or in it's consequences, to be attended with any the least diminution of that moderation, with any the least loss of brotherly love, and christian charity."—And again; "Unanimity in matters of opinion can, perhaps, never be obtained, but the want of it may be dispensed with if there be an unanimity in the practice of mutual forbearance, kindness, and good-will." See Dr. Watson, the bishop of Landaff's *Letter to the archbishop of Canterbury*, p. 50.

lawyer, and judge, Sir Michael Foster, then recorder of Bristol, and afterwards one of the judges of the court of king's bench, in his *Examination of the scheme of church power laid down in the Codex, &c.* (1735.)^y

O 4

The

^y The oppressive and unconstitutional proceedings of the ecclesiastical courts, have long wanted the strictest scrutiny from a parliamentary inquiry, and will continue to do so, until their proceedings are reviewed and circumscribed by the wisdom and authority of the legislature. The attention of the house of commons was called to *A bill for the better regulating the proceedings of ecclesiastical courts*, presented to the house April 9, 1733, by Sir Nathaniel Curzon, which was read the first time, and ordered to be read a second time. But after several alterations and amendments made to it, the bill was dropped. A copy of it is preserved in the Gentlemen's magazine, for 1733, vol. iii. pages 625, 626. A fact stated by Mr. Howard, of whom it is no compliment to say, he stands in the first class of good citizens and patriots, should seem most amply to call the attention and vigilance of parliament, to an evil which saps every principle of legal liberty.—See his *State of the prisons in England*, third edit. quarto, 1784, p. 416, note *; where the following account is recorded: “ In the old prison at *Rothwell* “ in Yorkshire, I saw both times I was there, one “ *William Carr*, a weaver: he had given a bad name “ to a woman, who was said not to deserve a very “ good

The other tract written by our author in this business, was a sequel to the former, and entitled, (XLII.) *Some further considerations on the reasons alledged against Dr. Rundle's promotion to the see of Gloucester,*

“ good one : she cited him to the ecclesiastical court ;
 “ and he was imprisoned 4th of May, 1774. He had
 “ a wife and three children. I will transcribe a line
 “ or two of the warrant.—*Forasmuch as the royal power*
 “ *ought not to be wanting to the holy church in it's com-*
 “ *plaints,—attach the said W. C.——until he shall have*
 “ *made satisfaction to the holy church, as well for the con-*
 “ *tempt, as for the injury by him done unto it.*” He was
 “ discharged 26th July, 1776, by the insolvent act ;
 “ a clause being then inserted for those prisoners.”—

The iniquity of similar proceedings, probably gave occasion to a remark said to have been made by the late Dr. Johnson. He has been reported to have shewn the manuscript of the former part of his tragedy of *Irene*, to a friend at Lichfield, who was officially connected with the courts belonging to the cathedral or peculiars there. His friend is represented to have expressed his opinion, of so much of the tragedy as he had seen, in terms of the highest approbation, and to have added, that he thought the writer had left no possibility of heightening the catastrophe in the concluding part of the play. “ Sir,” replied Dr. Johnson, “ I have
 “ enough in reserve for my purpose ; for, in the last act,
 “ I intend to put my heroine into the ecclesiastical court
 “ of Lichfield, which will fill up the utmost measure of
 “ human calamity.”

cester, (1735.). And the design seems to have been rather to remonstrate with the bishop of London upon his behaviour, and to reply to some of the very puny arguments which had been offered by certain of his retainers in the anonymous apologies for his conduct, than to serve the interest of Dr. Rundle, or give further information in his behalf. ^z The interest of the bishop, and the opposition which he had instigated, prevailing, Dr. Martin Benson was promoted to the vacant see of Gloucester;

^z The following pamphlets were published on this occasion. 1. The reasons alledged against the promotion of Dr. Rundle to the see of Gloucester, seriously and dispassionately considered. 2. The case of Dr. Rundle's promotion, &c. or some remarks on the reasons. 3. An apology for Dr. Codex, humbly addressed to the Doctor. 4. A short and plain answer, &c. 5. Some seasonable remarks upon a pamphlet, entitled, the Reasons, &c. 6. The case decided, or considerations, shewing, that the gentlemen of the Temple has fully justified his opposition to Dr. Rundle's promotion. 7. The parallel. 8. An argument, proving, that the method taken for obstructing Dr. R—'s advancement, is dangerous to his Majesty's prerogative. Also a reply to the case of Dr. R—'s promotion, &c. 9. Some further considerations on the reasons alledged. 10. Some observations offered to the public.

ter; and at the same time, Dr. (afterwards Sir George) Fleming was appointed to Carlisle, and Dr. Secker, who had been the associate of Dr. Rundle in the family of bishop Talbot, was nominated to the see of Bristol. ^a

Very early in the year 1736, Dr. Sykes appeared as the advocate for the enlargement of the toleration of protestant dissenters, and shewed in a tract, so entitled, (XLIII.) *The reasonableness of applying for the repeal, or explanation of the corporation and test acts, impartially considered.* The arguments here used for the repeal of the acts in question, do chiefly respect the unreasonableness

^a The biographers of the late archbishop Secker, in their account of his life, prefixed to his sermons, immediately after mentioning his ordination by bishop Talbot, observe, that “the bishop’s domestic chaplain
“at that time (1723.) was Dr. Rundle, a man of
“warm fancy, and very brilliant conversation, but
“apt sometimes to be carried by the vivacity of his
“wit, into indiscreet and ludicrous expressions, which
“created him enemies, and, on one occasion, produced
“disagreeable consequences. With him, Mr. Secker
“was soon after associated in the bishop’s family, and
“both taken down by his lordship to Durham in
“July 1723.”

reasonableness of the laws in being, which exclude protestant dissenters from the enjoyment of offices of power, profit, and trust : some of these arguments are particularly directed against the bad policy of such laws. Our author also takes occasion to reply to the objections of the writer of *The dispute adjusted*,^b who had undertaken to prove, “ that *no time can be proper* to apply for a repeal of the corporation and test acts.”

In the course of Dr. Sykes's tract, two remarks are made, which, as matters of fact and precedents, apply directly to the practicability, as well as the reasonableness of the repeal for which he pleaded. The test required of members of parliament, operates only to the exclusion of papists, not to protestant dissenters ; so that though they are not admitted into such offices

^b The writer of *The dispute adjusted*, which had been published some years before, was no other than bishop Gibson ; and was thought to be the most able advocate that appeared at that time in vindication of the corporation and test acts. An answer to this tract by bishop Hoadly, with a preface by Dr. Avery, was published in 1736. See Hoadly's *Works*. vol. ii. p. 971—990.

offices of trust and power, as sheriff, justice of the peace, or mayor of a corporation, they are admitted to take their seats in parliament, and thereby placed in a situation of greater confidence, and wherein their conduct is less amenable to established law.

And in reply to the question,—in what other country is toleration so far extended? it is observed, that in Scotland there is no legal incapacity, whereby an episcopalian is disqualified for any place of power or trust; which is a clear instance of a national church being established without incapacitating laws. And he recites, from a former plea for the “rights of the protestant dissenters to absolute toleration, by a noble lord,” several instances of the good effects of such toleration in Holland, whence the states had received some very eminent and distinguished services.

The act of union having been stated as one impediment in the way of any extension of the act of toleration, which, though futile in the extreme, is replied to; and the replication has not only respect to the principles of the act, but to subsequent facts; he instances the alteration of patronages in
Scotland

Scotland by an act 10th of queen Anne, and another, in the same year, for making it lawful for those of the episcopal communion in Scotland to meet and assemble for the exercise of divine worship, and for repealing former acts which invalidated their baptisms, &c.

The further consideration of this subject, or the placing it in another point of view, was signified in an advertisement at the end. This engagement being fulfilled, “the next week,” we may now proceed to make mention of it. The front page is, equally with the former tract, descriptive of it's import, being entitled, (XLIV.) *The corporation and test acts, shewn to be of no importance to the church of England.* (1736.) What is thus stated in the title page, is abundantly proved in the course of those which follow. The arguments of the author of the *History of the test act*, are answered; and that just liberty is pleaded for dissenters, to which they have an undisputed right, except in the statute law of this kingdom. And it is demonstrated, that the repeal of every law which damps the enjoyment, or
impedes

impedes the free exercise of such their christian liberty, would not only be a concession to the claims of justice, but a measure founded in much political wisdom.

The abuse of the institution of the Lord's supper, in making it subservient to purposes not only foreign, but contrary to it's original design, has not been regarded by statesmen; little thinking that while they scandalize the reasonable institutions of a pure religion, whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light, they are silently, and at the same time deeply undermining the best security of the commonwealth. For, as our author observes, "when the sacrament is made a qualification for civil office, it is applied to ends for which Christ never designed it; for purposes which he never intended: it is perverted from spiritual to civil ends; from the religious end, to make men better, to a support of one party of christians against another; not as a symbol of friendship, but of a party and division; not in remembrance of the death of Christ, but in memory of the grant of an office." ^b

Before

^b See *The Corporation and test acts*, &c. p. 25.

Before the close of this year, our author addressed (XLV.) *A letter to the reverend the president and fellows of Sion college, upon occasion of the addresses (then) lately presented to the bishop of London.* (1736.) But not having been able to procure the tract, I cannot, with certainty, say what was the subject of it.

Early in the year 1737, Dr. Sykes published his (XLVI.) *Inquiry into the meaning of the Demoniacs in the new Testament*; which was followed, the same year, by a “second edition, corrected and amended.” This piece cannot be said to be wholly anonymous; for though it did not bear the name of its author in the title page, it was there said to be written by T. P. A. P. O. A. B. I. T. C. O. S. This whimsical assortment of initial and capital letters, is descriptive of the preferment which our author held in the church of Salisbury; and it is probable, that they were, at the time, easily decyphered by the public, whose curiosity would not fail to be excited by so novel an appearance. The letters will be found to answer to the following solution:
 “ The

“ The præcentor, and prebendary of Alton-Borealis, in the church of Sarum.”

Dr. Sykes, following the opinion of the eminently learned Mr. Joseph Mede, shews, that “ demons,” signified simply the souls of departed men, who were no more mortal, being translated out of this life ; and were names given, (from supposed invisible causes,) to visible effects, which appeared in various shapes, as epilepsy, madness, melancholy, and other disorders of the mind and body ; and that this was equally the meaning of the Greeks and Romans. He then inquires into the meaning affixed to the word, by the jews, as found in the old Testament, as also in Josephus, which corresponds with those of both the Greeks and Romans. He afterwards proceeds to examine the several passages in the gospels and the acts, where demons, or demoniacs are spoken of, all of which he understands, as meaning the souls (spirits) of dead men, which were considered as the cause, the imaginary cause ; and epilepsy or madness the effect proceeding from that cause. The general objections and difficulties in the way of this interpretation are very candidly produced,

produced, and arranged in five separate arguments, with their respective answers annexed.

Though Dr. Sykes had advanced no novel doctrine, the very revival of this interpretation would naturally awaken the attention of the learned, and invite an examination of the subject. Dr. Sykes neither expected, nor wished his opinion to be received without examination. In a letter to Mr. Birch, dated from Rayleigh, the 3d of August this year (1737.) and with whom, through life, he continued an intimate and friendly intercourse in what concerned his literary pursuits; he says, “I hear that Mr. Church is writing an answer to my last: I am not at all sorry to have a thing of that nature thoroughly canvassed, especially by one, who has before wrote with civility and good manners. I apprehend that the point will be laboured to shew that *δαμονιον* was used in a bad sense, before Christ’s time: or that some platonist (I don’t know who,) has used the christian language earlier than I have said.

“The scriptures are, I think, very fully with me, and so is all history that gives
P any

any account of the origin of idolatry. I have often wondered that the writers upon this subject, I mean Vossius, &c. have not treated this subject as it deserves. Either I mistake, or here is a wide field as yet scarce cultivated: the briars and bushes are not raked off, that one can hardly tell what sort of soil lies under them. The little corner that I have attempted to clear, promises a fertility which would pay the husbandman's labour, or else I judge very wrong upon this head."^e

Mr. Twells was among the first to answer the *Inquiry*; and I apprehend Dr. Sykes to have been misinformed in respect to Mr. Church's engaging in the controversy; he did not however meet with an uncandid adversary in Mr. Twells, in his *Answer to the Inquiry, &c. shewing that the demons therein spoken of were fallen angels; and that the demoniacs were persons really possessed.* (1737.) Nor was Dr. Sykes more successful in his conjecture respecting the point which would be most laboured, by those who writ against him; for Mr. Twells contents himself with controverting the passages

^e British Museum. Birch, MSS. 4319—748.

passages in the old Testament, and the use which Dr. Sykes has made of the testimony of Josephus, as also of the christian father, Justin Martyr; inlisting also into his service the testimonies of Tatian and Tertullian. He then proceeds through the passages of the new Testament, maintaining the personification of the devil, and that "demons" mean the fallen and apostate angels.

In support of the same, then commonly received opinion, appeared also *An essay towards vindicating the literal sense of the demoniacs in the new Testament; in answer to a late Inquiry, &c.* (1737.) The writer of this essay has acquitted himself with great good temper, and good manners; and speaks of the learning and ingenuity, the seriousness and modesty of the inquirer. The arguments here produced, are generally of the same sort with those advanced by Mr. Twells, and though they are stated with ability and good learning, need not be recapitulated in this place.

Mr. Whiston published, about the same time, *An account of the demoniacs, and of the power of casting out demons, both in the*

new Testament, and in the four first centuries: occasioned by a late pamphlet of Dr. Sykes's entitled, *An inquiry, &c.* (1737.) Mr. Whiston here produces his texts of scripture, and testimonies of antiquity, with his observations thereon, tending to defend the "fatal interposition of the devil, or of his angels, and demons, in the conduct of mankind." ^f And he not only admits demoniacal possessions, though in their effects, they were only visible in madness, and other similar disorders; but argues even for the continuance in the church of "the divine power of ejecting demons to the middle of the fourth century." ^g But there is no particular mention made of Dr. Sykes's *Inquiry*, except in Mr. Whiston's title page; nor does it seem any further to have occasioned Mr. Whiston's *Account*, than having drawn the general attention of the public to the subject of the demoniacs.

Before the close of the year 1737, Dr. Sykes, paid that attention to the two former opponents, which their learning and candor

^f See Whiston's *Account*, &c. p. 73.

^g Ibid. p. 53.

dor deserved, in (XLVII.) *A further inquiry, &c. where the inquiry is vindicated against the objections of the reverend Mr. Twells, and of the author of the Essay in answer to it.* I can only account for Mr. Whiston's pamphlet remaining unnoticed, by supposing that it was not published before Dr. Sykes had made considerable progress in producing and substantiating his evidence in the *Further inquiry*. In this work he gives a system of grecian demonology, in support of his doctrine; and then proceeds to the several passages in the old and new Testament, (except the gospels, which had been before considered,) as also such wherein the words "evil spirit" occur, which he interprets, not to signify, "a devil or fallen angel," but rather, that temper of mind which is designed to be expressed in the particular place where they are to be found. He replies to some objections made both by Mr. Twells, and the essayist, and answers some questions proposed by them upon the subject.

Among those whose anger was raised against the author of the *Inquiry*, was Mr. Warburton, who, from a letter lately pub-

lished, (without date) seems, by his having made some gracious abatements in scurrility, in the second edition of the first volume of the *Divine Legation*, to have found cause to soften his displeasure and resentment against Dr. Sykes; but not having either of these editions at hand, we must give the demonstrator credit, upon the faith of his own letter, as well for his omissions, as for the former ebullitions of an high and resentful spirit. “ You see,” says he, “ I have published a second edition of my first volume: there are several additions in support of my scheme and reasonings on it, which I hope will not displease you, as likewise several omissions of passages which were thought vain, insolent, and ill-natured, particularly that against the author of the Inquiry into the demoniacs, which I hope will less displease you.”^h Notwithstanding this better temper of Mr. Warburton, according to his own account, we shall have future occasion to observe the loss of it, in some of his subsequent volumes

^h See Mr. Maty's *Review* for March, 1782. vol. i. p. 142.

lumes of the Legation, where we shall find his untractable spirit break out afresh against our author, for a different offence. But there is also a sermon by this gentleman upon *the fall of satan*,ⁱ which is directly levelled against the inquirer, with as much personal acrimony as could decently, and more than is usually put into such compositions. In respect however to Dr. Mead, who continued to maintain the same side of the question with Dr. Sykes, the preacher appears to have been more than ordinarily courteous, considering that he had presumed to persevere in his dissent from the decided authority of so doughty a champion.

Mr. Twells replied to Dr. Sykes, in *An answer to the Further inquiry*. (1735.) And he was followed by Dr. Hutchinson, in a *Sermon* before the university of Oxford, in support of the usual interpretation of ΔΑΙΜΟΝΕΣ and ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΑ, in the new Testament. (1738.) There was also published an anonymous *Reply to the Further inquiry*: and *Some thoughts on the miracles of Jesus*; by an impartial hand; which had

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respect

ⁱ See Warburton's *Sermons*. vol. iii. f. 10.

respect to the same question. These were severally considered in a tract, entitled, *A review of the controversy about the meaning of demoniacs in the new Testament*; by a lover of truth: to which is also added, an *appendix*, in answer to the critical dissertation, concerning the words ΔΑΙΜΩΝ and ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ. (1739.) This review and appendix were written by Mr. Gregory Sharpe, afterwards master of the Temple,^k who was evidently disposed to the same sentiment with the inquirer, and became afterwards his particular friend. But this *Review* did by no means conclude the debate; it was examined in its turn, by a party concerned, in *A short state of the controversy about the meaning of the demoniacs, &c. with a vindication of the Reply to the Further inquiry, from all the objections of a late*

^k It is ascribed to him by the reverend J. Robertson, in a catalogue of Dr. Sharpe's writings prefixed to a volume of his posthumous sermons, published 1772;—of which Mr. Robertson was the editor. The same gentleman was also editor of the fine edition of THE WORKS OF ALGERNON SYDNEY, in quarto, 1772: and I have been obliged to him for some communications relating to Dr. Sykes, with whom he was many years personally acquainted.

late tract entitled, *A review of the controversy*. By the same hand ; (1739.) who was, as it should seem, no other than the essayist before mentioned. And also *Remarks on the Review*, by the author of *Some thoughts*. (1739.) To the above should be added, Mr. Pegge's *Examination of the Inquiry*.

It is not to be presumed that I have given the titles of *all* the pamphlets written about this time upon the subject of the demoniacs mentioned in the new Testament. It would have been a still more irksome task, and far beyond the compass of my design, to have given a more particular detail of the arguments urged by the controversialists on either side. And more particularly as the subject has since passed the critical and judicious examination of Dr. Lardner and Mr. Farmer of Walthamstow ; in whose writings, and in the two *Inquiries* of Dr. Sykes, all the stores of learning and reasoning upon the question appear to be exhausted, and to have a decisive advantage over the arguments of their opponents.¹

Dr.

¹ See *The case of the demoniacs mentioned in the new Testament : Four discourses upon Mark v. 19. with an appendix for*

Dr. Sykes certainly continued persuaded of the truth of the doctrine advanced in his *Inquiries*, as appears from a private letter to Mr. Birch, written upwards of ten years after he had himself declined being further engaged in the controversy. “ Dr. Mead,” (says he, in 1749.) “ will not I hope be afraid of his adversary, for as long as Hippocrates and Aretæus subsist, (not to mention Plautus, &c.) it will be impossible to shew that demoniacs are at all different from either epileptic or mad men, unless there be some new light thrown on all that subject, from old authors that I never saw. All the old physicians knew the meaning of that word, as well as any modern divines, and can explain it as well, if I do not grievously mistake.” ^m

And, at this hour, it is owing to the successive labours of Mr. Joseph Mede, Dr. Sykes,

for further illustrating the subject. By Nathaniel Lardner. D.D. 1758. *An Essay on the demoniacs of the new Testament.* By Hugh Farmer. 1775.—And a letter to the reverend doctor Worthington, in answer to his late publication, entitled, *An impartial inquiry into the case of the gospel demoniacs.* By the same. 1778.

^m See MS. letter in British Museum. ‘ Birch’s MSS. 4319—748.

Sykes, Dr. Richard Mead, Dr. Lardner, and Mr. Farmer,—opposed to antient prejudices, and several ingenious and plausible defences of them, that so great a number of christians have renounced the fanciful delusion of real possessions ; and admitted the more rational, consistent, and scriptural idea, that the demoniacs in the new Testament, were no other than persons afflicted with natural disorders, epilepsy, or madness ; and as such, the objects of our Saviour's affectionate attention and miraculous cure, by restoration to health of body, and a right mind.

CHAPTER V.

Dr. Sykes's promotion to the deanry of St. Burien in Cornwall, and to a prebend of Winchester. The publication of his "Principles and connexion of natural and revealed religion." 1739—1740.

ON the 28th of February 1739, Dr. Sykes was advanced to the deanry of St. Burien in Cornwall, which is in the patronage of the crown. And on the 15th of October 1740, he was collated to a prebend in the church of Winchester, through the steady friendship of his former patron bishop Hoadly, who had been translated to the see of Winchester in 1734. And it may fairly be presumed, that the bishop was not unconcerned, in Dr. Sykes's then late appointment to the deanry of St. Burien.

In this year our author published an elaborate defence of christianity, wherein (XLVIII.) *The principles and connexion of*

of natural and revealed religion, are distinctly considered. (1740.) This work has been much esteemed, and well received. The writer professes, in his preface, “so to treat of religion both natural and revealed, as to deduce it from it’s first principles, and to shew, that they are both rational, and worthy of every serious man’s attention; and to represent them in such a manner, as may shew what ground there is for a rational faith.” And the design was worthy of the great occasion for it; for, says he, “the men who raise the most plausible objections against christianity, raise them, as far as he had observed, chiefly from the *irrational* grounds upon which it is defended, or the *irrational* doctrines it is said to teach.”

The valuable matter contained in this work, and the manner in which it is arranged, will appear, in some degree, from the following view of it. But the account here given is intended only to incite inquiry, not to give satisfactory information.

The subject of the *first* chapter is stated as a question; *whether there be any certain rule of action to man, and what that is?*—

And

And the result of this inquiry is, that "truth is the one only direct rule of action to all intelligent beings; to God, to angels, to men. It is an universal rule, and serves for not only all sorts of voluntary understanding beings, but measures all sorts of things that are to be done. It is the clear rule by which we may know whether what we do, be right or wrong, good or bad, in all circumstances; and it is a sure director to happiness, which is the great end we should all strive to attain."

He also considers *truth*, as a law, and every law, being a rule of action, implies obligation; he therefore proceeds to inquire into the nature of *obligation*, and to resolve it's necessary operation when connected with truth.

The conclusion deducible from this inquiry is, that "TRUTH being not only the *rule*, but the *law* of action, we are under strict *obligation* to follow it. And hence all deviation from truth in all cases, in not moral, as well as moral actions, is sinful; that sin, and the consequences of sin, will abound; that every mistake, inaccuracy in
work

work of all sorts, will be looked upon as so many violations of a law, and consequently become penal in the sight of God, who requires the observation of this law from all intelligent creatures."

The *second* chapter contains *several consequences which naturally arise from truth's being the rule and law of action*. These he enumerates as derived from the establishment of the doctrine of the preceding chapter; and enlarges upon them in the following order: (1.) "That it is the duty of all men to direct and govern their natural abilities by the certain rule of truth, or agreeably to the real, (not imaginary) circumstances of things. Every man must apply rightly his powers in order to be a good man; and the righteousness of the application consists in a conformity of action to truth. (2.) That the law of nature must be of constant and perpetual obligation. Man, considered as a reasonable creature, must constantly observe it: nor can any circumstances possibly arise, which can dispense with his obedience to it. (3.) That the circumstances of things being various, and their relations to one another

another, to us in many cases unknown, it follows, that we ought to lay up in our minds as many *particular true propositions* as we can; these being duly considered, may help to direct us to right action. (4.)

That whoever they be, that under any pretence whatever attempt to lessen the force, or sense of the obligation of the principles of honesty; or that would weaken the obligation of morality, by making it bend to politics; or would influence men to act contrary to truth or right; or that imagine nothing to be true, but what superiors command; or that do not pay a sacred regard to truth; or think that men ought to pay a greater regard to any thing than truth; they are the greatest enemies to virtue and honour that can be, and ought to be detested by every serious person.

(5.) That truth being the rule of action, the wisdom of God has so ordered matters, that we never deviate from truth, the truth of the case, but we find an inconvenience proportionable to the deviation from it.

(6.) That however difficult it may be in certain cases to discover truth, or to comprehend the true circumstances and relations
of

of things, yet it must be observed, that moral truths are generally easily intelligible. The minds of men are so framed, that truth is as obvious to people of ordinary capacities, when the terms made use of to express it are clear, as colours are to their eyes, or sounds to their ears. (7.) That the great objection against making truth the rule or law of action, hence easily solved. (8.) That the different manners of expressing themselves has led some to imagine a difference between writers, who have treated on the foundations of morality, who yet really mean one and the same thing. Some call it truth; others, the nature of things; others use the terms, fitness, agreement, or relations of things to one another. (9.) That moral rectitude, or moral pravity, do not arise from any natural good or evil annexed to the rule, but from the agreement to, or disagreement from, the rule itself to which the action is referred; and this the term, rectitude, implies. (10.) That as truth is the rule of action, all known violation of it in physical cases is folly, because we cannot alter the relations of things; but in morals

it must be sin; and must expose the man that does it, to such punishment as his superior and judge shall think fit to impose. Lastly, that hence the common cases which are put, in relation to the deception of children, idiots, madmen, and ruffians, may receive an easy solution. For let the true circumstances, in any of these cases, be stated, and the action ought to be according to them."

The *third* chapter treats *Of liberty*; and therein is examined and maintained the free agency of man, subservient to the obligation to observe the rule and law of action. And, presuming that he has established the power of action, and a certain rule, which it is the duty and happiness of men to follow, he next considers whether there be such a being as we term God, in order to come at the exact principles upon which religion is, and must be built.

The *fourth* chapter therefore is entitled, OF GOD. The necessary existence of a first cause is proved, (with further reference to Dr. Clarke, and Mr. Wollaston,) and the *pantheistic* system, supported by Vanini, and Spinoza, and more lately by Mr. Toland,

Toland, and others atheistically disposed, is minutely examined, and effectually refuted. “ Having then in the four chapters considered the foundations upon which all religion is built : and so far,” says he, “ as any of these are denied, or any principle is maintained that consequentially subverts any of these, so far is all religion, natural as well as revealed, more or less affected.”

He then goes on to the *fifth* chapter, which is entitled, *Of religion, and what that is.* And here he observes, that “ religion should not be stiled, man’s duty to God ; but his doing his duty in his station, whatever that is, from the principle of believing that there is a God, and that his acting so is agreeable to his will. When therefore the question is, what is religion ? And whether there be any such principle ? The answer is, religion consists in the belief or practice of any thing that is right, from the consideration of God ; and of what is consequent to that, his favour or displeasure, according to the goodness or badness of our actions. The foundations of the principle are, the

arguments for the existence of God: and the advantage of the principle is, that the rule of action is now doubly secured, by it's own reasonableness, and by this demonstratively addition."

In the *sixth* chapter, which treats *Of revelation in general*, it is observed, that "the great use and advantage of revelation consists, not in discovering any new moral duties, except as it shews new relations; not in making a more perfect rule of action; not in telling us any thing which the rule of action to men, as reasonable creatures, was defective in; but in supplying free agents with new arguments, and new motives, to do that which is known to be their duties." He then proceeds to consider the reasonable evidences in support of revelation, and the general objection against it, from the want of it's universality.

The subject of the *seventh* chapter is, *How revelation may be distinguished from reason*; and this is ascertained, by such truths being made known to us, which were not discoverable by the ordinary use of our natural faculties. He treats also of the
credibility

credibility of inspiration, and in what parts of revealed religion, inspiration is most distinguishable; and where and in what parts of the scriptures, (*all scripture being said to be given by inspiration*, which is also explained) it need least to be insisted on. Grotius's opinion thereon is recited, (particularly on St. Luke's gospel,) and also bishop Fleetwood's.

The question, *Whether there has in fact been any such thing as revelation?* is the subject of the *eighth* chapter. This is answered in the affirmative, by the examination and completion of several of the prophecies of the old and new Testament, least liable to exception of any kind; and which took place at various great distances of time from the delivery of those several prophecies here inquired into. Nevertheless, he well observes generally, that “when one considers the nature of common evidence for past facts, in many instances it must be allowed to decrease according to the distance of time from the facts: but in the particular case of a series of prophecies, the evidence constantly increases, as events happen. Prophecies therefore, and events correspond-

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ing,

ing, are a growing evidence ; and if any book contains a series of prophecies, the persons who live at a distance from the time when the revelation was made, must have very great and strong evidence of it's truth. Those indeed, before whom miracles were immediately worked, had very strong evidence of the revelation : But then such as see the events foretold, accomplished, have likewise so great, that they cannot but acknowledge that in fact there has been such a thing as revelation ; and they must see extraordinary evidence even in ordinary occurrences foretold."

Chapter the *ninth* contains *The other evidences that a revelation has in fact been given.* The argument principally advanced in this chapter is this, supposing that "the same persons are reported to work miracles, and to prophesy too, and we see the prophecy fulfilled by exact event ; this circumstance will make it more probable, that the miracles said to be done were really done, than if we had not such additional evidence." This is instanced in the case of Moses, and the same is also observed of the new Testament ; and the difference between
 them,

them, and pretended miracles, is noted generally. The famous prophecy of Isaiah, (chap. liii.) and others are cited.

The next consideration is, *How we are to judge of the sense of revelation*; which is the subject of the *tenth* chapter. Dr. Sykes laments the want of a true critical commentary upon the old Testament, and argues against the common interpretation of several of the prophecies, as bearing *double senses*, the one immediate, the other remote. And further, he insists, agreeably thereto, that the citations, in the new Testament, of passages from the old Testament, with the addition, *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying*—have respect only to a similitude of circumstances; and some instances are adduced as proofs thereof. The chapter concludes as follows: “there is but one literal, real sense of any prophecy; and that contains the whole that God designed to reveal. Disputes may sometimes arise, amongst learned men, what was the intended particular of some part of a prophecy; but there was but one sense of every part, as well as of the whole. And if we imagine more than one intended, we may affirm a

Q 4

prophecy

prophecy to be so often fulfilled as there are circumstances which tally with the words of any proposition contained in it; *i. e.* we could never tell when it was fulfilled at all, which is making all this sort of revelations entirely useless, and superfluous.”^a

In considering *The advantages of revelation*, which employ the *eleventh* chapter; it is observed, that care should be taken, not to decry the sufficiency of reason, lest the arguments should reach revelation, for there is in the christian world as much idolatry and superstition in all it's forms, as in the heathen world. Revelation, he considers, not necessary to “fix a rule of morality,” or to “ascertain religion,” but “containing motives and reasons for the practice of what is right, more and different from, what

^a Dr. Benson, in the *Introduction* to his *Paraphrase and notes on St. Paul's epistles*; sect. v. (vol. i. p. xxii.) says, “The prophecies have been thought to favour
“double senses, the most of any part of holy scripture.
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what natural reason without this can suggest." This argument is traced from it's source, and exemplified from the new Testament. In the conclusion of this chapter is added a general scholium, which is written in the genuine spirit of a true christian.

The *twelfth* chapter contains *Objections against revelation, and the answers to them*. And it will be found, that the objections are fully and impartially stated, and that they are answered with liberality and ability. The following are those which are particularly noticed; (1.) Revelation being confined to books, and those in unknown languages, and subject to various readings, is thence precarious and uncertain. (2.) The distant time in which it was given, and it's want of universality. (3.) The obscurity of the place where the miracles of Jesus were wrought. (4.) The matter of the revelation as unworthy of God; and the manner in which it is written, subject to such various interpretations. (5.) The obvious deficiency in both jews and christians in good morals, who should excel all others in their practice, in proportion

prophecy to be so often fulfilled as there are circumstances which tally with the words of any proposition contained in it; *i. e.* we could never tell when it was fulfilled at all, which is making all this sort of revelations entirely useless, and superfluous.”^a

In considering *The advantages of revelation*, which employ the *eleventh* chapter; it is observed, that care should be taken, not to decry the sufficiency of reason, lest the arguments should reach revelation, for there is in the christian world as much idolatry and superstition in all it's forms, as in the heathen world. Revelation, he considers, not necessary to “fix a rule of morality,” or to “ascertain religion,” but “containing motives and reasons for the practice of what is right, more and different from, what

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portion to their greater knowledge of what is right.

And, in consequence of some objections then lately advanced by certain infidel writers, the *thirteenth* chapter contains *An answer to the objections made against the law of Moses, taken from human sacrifices supposed to have been appointed in it: and from the command to destroy utterly the seven nations.*

(1.) The objection made against the law of Moses, on account of human sacrifices supposed to have been appointed in it, is stated at large, from Tindal's *Christianity as old as the creation*. And it is answered, that the law did not authorize the putting the devoted person to death; and that the objection is founded on a wrong translation and interpretation of Leviticus xxvii. 29, 30. And the examples brought in favour of the objection, as the cases of captives taken in war, Jephtha's daughter, and Samuel slaying Agag in Gilgal, are severally answered. (2.) The command in the law, and the consequent practice relating to the *destroying utterly the seven nations*, are stated; and the destruction which was ordered,

dered, is proved, as well from the following state of those nations, as from the true meaning of the law itself, to have respect only to their polity and form of government, as nations, and not to a general massacre. This interpretation is further supported from the various, no less than ten, different senses of the word, *Hberem*, signifying *to forbid, to be unlawful, to destroy, &c.* critically examined.

The *fourteenth* chapter contains *An inquiry into what moral principles the heathen world had, before our Saviour's times.* Upon the subjects of this, and the following chapter, Dr. Sykes observes in his preface, that "in his search after truth, he was not solicitous where it led him, since he was resolved to pursue and embrace it; and this was the result of his inquiry: that just so far as evidence would go, he was determined to assent, and no further."

Accordingly, he here recites the notions of the heathens, concerning the importance of truth; their excellent notions of God; his unity; that he was underived, self-existent, and eternal; wise and intelligent; that he was the maker and governor
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of the universe; that he was good and placable; the avenger of evil, and rewarder of good actions; the object of prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving, and submission; and then is added the notions of the heathens concerning the immortality of the soul. It is further proved, from the writings of their philosophers, that the morality of the heathens carried them, even to the not resisting evil; to love their enemies, and to do good to them that hated them; to hazard or lay down their lives for their brethren; to acts of great humility, to part with all causes of sin, and to avoid excessive anger. Concluding, nevertheless, that "christianity does not make the law of reason different from what it was, but has added several motives, principally taken from another world, in order to make men more careful to observe it: and that the before stated view of the morals in the heathen world, does not make a revelation unnecessary."

He proceeds in the *fifteenth*, or last chapter, to *show that the gentiles had not their moral knowledge from revelation*. And it is here contended and argued, that the
 heathens

heathens owed those notions stated in the preceding chapter, to the faculties and powers which God had given them, and with which, if they would apply as they ought, they might easily discover all those important truths which would lead them to happiness. Or, in the language of St. Paul, that *the gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves : which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another.* (Rom. ii. 14, 15.) And not that they received such knowledge by tradition from Abraham, or Noah, or Adam, who had it directly from God, as some suppose ; neither that they received it directly, or indirectly from the jews, or their sacred writings, as others maintain. The first supposition receives a short answer ; the second, that the heathen philosophers and moralists stole their doctrines from Moses and the prophets, is ably and learnedly opposed, and the source of their information clearly resolved into those “abilities which God had

had given to man to judge and think, and compare things together, and to observe their mutual relations, thence in fact discovering their notions of God, and of their souls, and of such moral practices, as would lead them to happiness."

The concluding page of this learned and rational account of religion, both natural and revealed, deserves to be copied, in full justification of the design of the writer, and the tendency of the principles maintained by him. "If the principles I have laid down," says he, "are rightly apprehended, it will be easy to go on, and to prove the truth of the christian religion, even with the greatest strictness. The prophecies of the old Testament, exactly agree to Jesus of Nazareth; and he worked miracles to prove himself to be the Christ; the prophecies of the new Testament are evidences of a revelation given to him, and to his apostles; and we see those very prophecies, some perfectly accomplished, others in part accomplished; enough amply to satisfy any curious person. I know no stronger evidence than this affords: may it be fully and impartially considered!

And

And then, as to any little errors, inaccuracies, defects, oversights, which I may have been guilty of in treating so delicate a subject as this is, the candid reader will forgive them in one whose whole and sole aim is truth, and virtue, and honesty, and the real service of that religion, and that only, which Jesus Christ came into the world to teach mankind."

The doctrine of the tenth chapter of the above-mentioned work, provoked the notice of Mr. Warburton, who on no occasion was disposed to use soft words, while the power of language, and his own imagination would supply him with hard names. But as few learned men would have answered it less satisfactorily, so none would have answered it more unhandfomely. The author of the *Divine legation of Moses demonstrated*,^b when setting himself formally to oppose Dr. Sykes's arguments against double senses in the prophecies, opens the review of the doctor's *principles* in the true spirit of the Warburtonian school, by first sneering at Dr. Sykes as one of the "some believers," and then emphatically

^b See vol. v. fourth edition, p. 308--322.

emphatically styling him the “bold rectifier of prejudices;” and concludes the notice he is pleased to take of him and of his arguments, by dismissing them for “a much welcomer guest, Mr. Collins himself.” No compliment was intended to Dr. Sykes in the preference, and more gracious reception of Anthony Collins, esq. Dr. Sykes was a rational, and a liberal christian, Mr. Collins was an unbeliever, and possibly, on that account, more to the taste of the hardy demonstrator; or, more probably, we should only place this preference among the innumerable instances of roughness and incivility which so frequently occur in the writings of Mr. Warburton, and remained unsoftened in those of the bishop of Gloucester.

C H A P T E R VI.

“ Brief discourse on miracles;” “ Rational communicant ;” *controversy with Mr. Warburton on his account of the conduct of the ancient legislators; of the double doctrine of the old philosophers; of the theocracy of the jews; and of Sir Isaac Newton’s chronology. Two tracts on the toleration of papists; and thanksgiving sermon at Winchester, on suppression of rebellion, 1742—1747.*

FROM a sincere desire to serve the cause of virtue and religion, both natural and revealed, and to place them upon their true foundations, Dr. Sykes published, his *Essay upon the truth of the christian religion*, and more recently, *The principles and connexion of natural and revealed religion*. From the same motives also, and because of the very great acuteness with which some books had been now lately written against revelation, he found it necessary to treat the defence of it, in a manner somewhat

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what different from what other writers had done. In order therefore to finish his design, as far as he could, of giving a complete vindication of the christian religion, in a consistent rational manner, and to shew that there was nothing absurd, or incredible in it, he published his (XLIX.) *Brief discourse concerning the credibility of miracles and revelation. Wherein the credibility of the gospel miracles is shewn, notwithstanding all later miracles may be rejected as fictitious.* (1742.) The second edition of this discourse appeared in 1749.

When Dr. Sykes wrote his *Connexion, &c.* he was well aware of the difficulties which he now proposed to consider distinctly: and this was the reason that led him to establish the credibility of revelation in the manner he then did, and confining himself, in a great measure, to the argument from prophecy. He now examined the objections themselves, with that freedom and impartiality that are due to them; being, at the same time, ready to own, that unless they can be satisfactorily removed, he should not wonder at the doubts and suspicions

suspensions that may lie upon the minds of very honest men.

He first enters largely upon what is meant by the word, “miracle:” and, under certain previous qualifications, defines a miracle to be “a designed effect, sensible, unusual in itself, beyond the art or power of man to do;” not choosing to put into the definition that it must be an effect “above, or besides, or contrary to the ordinary course of nature.”

Upon this ground, which is presumed to be more just, as well as more candid, than what is sometimes insisted upon by incautious, however subtle, infidels, Dr. Sykes proceeds to inquire, “whether there be any difference as to *credibility*, betwixt those done by Christ, and those done by others, who have since pretended to work miracles?” This inquiry is pursued upon general principles; and then applied to particular miracles which have been insisted on by papists in the present century, and to which unbelievers are, in general, well disposed to give the appearance of their approbation, for the sake of turning them against the evidences of christianity. The

miracles reported to have been done at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, are stated from Mons. Montgeron's account, not with a view to enter into a formal detection of them, but to admit the facts, for the sake of the argument, as stated by the historian of these devices ; and to object to their credibility as not done by, or at the request of the Abbé Paris ; as also, because there was no doctrine discovered by them, and consequently we are nowise concerned in them.

It is next resolved, what are the "lying wonders" mentioned in the new Testament, and how they may be distinguished from true miracles. And their having led men into the belief of falsehoods, or absurdities, or impieties, or wrong practices, are shewn to be the proper tests of their original.

Nor is it omitted to examine the objection which is made to the gospel records, because they contain accounts of some miracles reported to the world so long after the facts ; but as they are accompanied by predictions of future events, and the continuation of miraculous powers,
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down to the writing the history, the objection becomes frivolous and inconclusive.

The author then proceeds to another set of inquiries, arising from the doctrine of miracles considered as attesting any revelation, and forming a sequel to the preceding investigation. The first of these is, “ whether we can discover whether it be God himself, or some other invisible agent, that works a miracle.” The solution of this inquiry admits the agency of invisible spirits, or beings from God, by whose assistance men may be empowered to work a miracle ; in which case, this may in the greatest strictness be called a divine revelation, though even man be the intermediate agent. For, as he argues, it does not cease to be the command or will of the king, notwithstanding it is delivered to a third or fourth person, by the means of proper ministers who are the subordinate agents.

In order to remove the objection included in the question, “ how shall I know that the message delivered is really from God, and that I am not imposed on by a being that deceives me ? ” it is inquired, “ how it appears that the doctrine and the

miracle are not from some evil being seducing men?" And the answer sends us to the nature and tendency of the revelation; in the course of which, the miracles performed by Moses, and the wonders done by the magicians of Egypt, are accurately considered and explained.^a And the arguments of Marracius, a romish writer against the Koran, in favour of the "five permanent miracles," which he insists upon as proofs of the truths of christianity, are shewn to be no less futile than the stories of mahometism; and his arguments against the mahometan faith equally conclusive, when directed against the faith of his own church.

The third inquiry is, "What degree of assent is due to any doctrine revealed, which stands confirmed by miracles?" This must be proportioned to the grounds of probability that we are not imposed on. And, under the succeeding question, "Whether a partial revelation will prove that it comes from God himself, or from an inferior being?"

^a See Exodus vii. 10—12; also 20---22; *ibid.* viii. 6, 7, 18; and *Brief discourse*, second edition, p. 168---174.

being ?” it is urged, that the want of universality is no more a proof that a revelation does not come from God, than the barrenness of some soil, and even countries, compared with the fertility of others, prove that God is not the creator of both ; the same argument might also be deduced, and with the same success, from the inequality in the abilities and understandings of men. The same objection to revelation is further pursued in the fifth inquiry, “ Whether God be obliged, supposing that he grants a revelation, to grant it equally to all mankind ?” Upon which it is observed, that whilst he injures none, he may grant capacities for happiness in the grant of revelation, just as he grants different abilities to men, which will be rewarded according to their improvements.

There is a *Postscript*, in the second edition of the *Brief discourse*, addressed to the bishop of Lichfield, Dr. Richard Smallbroke, in answer to his charge to his clergy. The subject is no further important than as it affords a display of the bishop’s gross misrepresentation, and we may hope, his misapprehension also, of what Dr. Sykes had

written on the demoniacs, the testimony of Phlegon, and the subject of prophecy. The doctor, however, fails not to remind the bishop, in reply to the charge “of exposing the gospel to downright ridicule and contempt,” of a certain person who from his minute calculation in respect to the devils entering into the herd of swine, and not being able to dispose of the odd numbers, had been forced to the distressful operation of “splitting of devils.” The bishop was not to learn to whom the name of *Split-devil* was applied; and, it may be presumed, not unconscious of the occasion he had given for it.

Probably there never was a religious rite of greater simplicity in its design or institution, than that of the *Lord's supper*; so neither has there been any more perverted, not only by the grosser corruptions and superstructure of popery, but by the inventions conceived by several denominations of protestants. For, besides the subversion of this plain memorial of our Lord's death, and declaration of our being his disciples in christian communion with each other, to the support of a real presence
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with some, and to the affording extraordinary spiritual fights and assistances with others ; it has also been prostituted to the purposes of civil regulations ; and to partake of this holy ordinance, according to one prescribed form, has been made a necessary qualification to the obtaining of civil offices.

The controversy with Dr. Waterland on moral and positive duties, led to the full discussion of the nature, obligation, and supposed efficacy of this *sacrament*, as it is too generally called. And it was the desire of removing that scandal which is given to the christian religion, in our own country, by degrading and prostituting this institution to the secular ends of worldly and mistaken policy, that Dr. Sykes pleaded the reasonableness of repealing the corporation and test laws, and their non-importance to the church of England. He now attempted an easy and familiar explanation of the institution itself, as a religious commemoration, in a little tract, entitled, (L.) *The rational communicant : or a plain account of the nature, ends, and benefits of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Suited to the meanest capacities.* (1743.) The seventh edition, printed

printed so lately as 1783, is now before me. It is written in the way of dialogue, between a minister and his parishioners; and, in the course of the conversation, the nature, ends, and benefits of the Lord's supper are no less plainly, than truly set forth on the sure warrant of scripture, without respect to any systematical opinions, phrases, or expressions. The manner of this little piece is worthy the serious attention of every man, as it is admirably calculated for the information of the unlearned reader, for whose use it was more immediately designed; the whole is indeed well "suited to the meanest capacities," without being below the notice, or failing to edify the highest. The other explanations of this institution, written on the same liberal and rational plan, are bishop Hoadly's *Plain account of the nature and end of the sacrament of the Lord's supper*, first printed in 1735; of which an abridgment has since been published, by the writer of the present page, under the title of *The rational christian's assistant to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper.*^b And also

^b The second edition was printed for J. Johnson, 12mo. 1774.

also more lately Dr. Bell's excellent and masterly *Attempt to ascertain and illustrate the authority, nature, and design of the institution of Christ, commonly called the communion, and the Lord's supper.*^c And again, by the same ingenious writer, in a smaller and more popular form, entitled, *A practical inquiry into the authority, nature, and design of the Lord's supper; as they are explained in the new Testament itself.*

The next publication of Dr. Sykes's, was his (LI.) *Examination of Mr. Warburton's account of the conduct of the ancient legislators; of the double doctrine of the old philosophers; of the theocracy of the jews, and of Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology.* (1744.) This book was written in consequence of a conversation with an old and learned friend, Mr. P***,^d who, not unaptly, considered Mr. Warburton's book as a learned *romance*; adding, that the digressions

^c The second edition, with improvements, was printed for J. Robson, 8vo. 1781.---The second edition of the *Practical inquiry* was printed for Rivingtons.

^d Most probably the reverend and learned Thomas Pyle.

gressions in it about the mysteries, the hieroglyphics, and the book of Job, are or may be deemed, so many ingenious *novels*, which serve to relieve or divert the reader. Mr. P***, exhibiting to Dr. Sykes some misrepresentations made by Mr. Warburton in his recital of evidence, raised a suspicion against the fidelity of his report, and the justice of his conclusions, which 'till then had been unsuspected by the examiner.

With respect to “the conduct of the ancient legislators,” it was Mr. Warburton’s purpose to prove, that “there is a certain difference between Moses and all other legislators. That Moses never inculcated the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments; which yet is absolutely necessary to the well-being of society; and that all other legislators did. Hence he undertook to demonstrate the divine legation of Moses from his omission of this doctrine among the jews.”

It seems Mr. Warburton made some difference, between the two first editions of his book, in the statement of a proposition to be proved. In the latter it stood, the legislators endeavoured “to propagate

propagate religion by making the doctrine of a providence, with which *in it's full extent* they prefaced and introduced their laws, the grand sanction of their institutions." Whereas in the first edition, *a providence in it's full extent* was the grand sanction of their laws.

Dr. Sykes, however, denies that either the one or the other is true. He examines the proœmium to the laws of Zaleucus, cited by Mr. Warburton; and that to the laws of Charondas, which was omitted by him; and that also of Cicero to his book of laws for an Utopian commonwealth; and compares these with the institutions of Moses. He vindicates the laws of Moses, as inculcating the same reverence for God; and observes, that when Mr. Warburton "attempts to demonstrate the divine legation of Moses by the medium of no future state of reward and punishment in the moisaic dispensation, he must equally demonstrate the divine legation of Zaleucus, and Charondas, and Cicero; since none of them, nor indeed any one else of the old legislators ever made a providence *in it's full extent*, or a future state of rewards and punishments,

punishments, the sanction of their laws." And from a further state of Mr. Warburton's representation of a future state of rewards and punishments, it should seem he gave the heathen world the advantage over the jews, in this respect; "though in truth," says Dr. Sykes, "it was a doctrine universally received and believed by jews as well as gentiles: and therefore all the old legislators established their respective national religions upon principles already allowed and admitted; and therefore had no necessity to mention that notion particularly, either as the *sanction* of their laws, or in any other manner." He further shews, that neither Triptolemus, the most ancient legislator of the Athenians, Draco, nor Solon, prefaced their laws with the doctrines in question: nor did the laws of Romulus and Numa, among the old Romans; nor the laws of the xii tables, say any thing of a future state of rewards and punishments, or a providence in it's full extent.

The conclusion of this inquiry is, that "Moses is upon the same footing at least with all these ancient legislators: his notions

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tions of a providence are as extensive as theirs: his words ought in common justice to be construed as extensively as theirs; or their words reduced to the extent of his. And if the bare omission of a future state in any body of institutes be sufficient to prove the divine legation of such legislator, any one may judge how many of the ancient legislators will have a claim to a divine mission, as well as Moses."

Our author now proceeds to the second subject of his examination, called, "the double doctrine of the ancient philosophers." The teachers of wisdom in the schools of ancient philosophy, gave two kinds of lectures; one sort were to a few individuals in private in a morning, and were stiled *esoteric*, as Aristotle taught Alexander; the other were delivered to any number of voluntary and mixed hearers in public in the evening, which Aristotle practised in the Lycaum, and these were stiled *exoteric*. In the former, it seems, the teacher was more finished in his composition, and exercised greater subtilty in argument, and more learning; and that in the latter he was more general and more familiar

liar in his manner. Dr. Sykes has satisfactorily stated, from authority, the nature and purpose of both customs. Mr. Warburton had conceived that, in this different mode of teaching, he had discovered that in the one case they taught what was true, and in the other what was popular, or, in other words, what they did not believe: Whereas, in fact, the lesson on these different occasions was accommodated not to the prejudices, but the capacities of the vulgar. Mr. Warburton avows his opinion to be new; Dr. Sykes admits the novelty, but denies the truth of it. He enters very fully and masterly into his proofs, and examines Mr. Warburton's general reasons in support of his paradox; and, in the course of this examination, offers a full vindication of Plato's belief of a future state of rewards and punishments, which Mr. Warburton considered as having been advanced only in the *exoteric* or popular way, agreeably to the prejudices of the people, and not according to his own private conceptions, and therefore no proof that Plato believed it. And as Dr. Sykes says, "if he has shewn Mr. Warburton to have been mistaken in this point of the double

double doctrine of the ancients, great part of his third book will be nothing to the purpose."

The third subject of examination, in the work before us, is "the nature of the jewish theocracy and it's duration." Dr. Sykes opens this inquiry with a vindication of Mr. Bayle's account of the law of Moses, in the punishment of idolaters and false prophets with death, as perfectly corresponding with Mr. Locke's account, to which Mr. Warburton had given the exclusive preference; reminding us also that Mr. Bayle's account was published three years before Mr. Locke's, and agreed also with Dr. Spencer, who preceded Bayle, in the publication of the same sentiment, about a year. All these considered this punishment as inflicted upon traitors and rebels, for an overt act of high treason, while under a theocracy; the application therefore of the precedent will by no means hold under any other species of government, in support of any reputed orthodox believers inflicting the same punishment, or other penalties, upon reputed heretics.

The following pages, upon this part of the subject, exhibit the confusion and in-

extricable difficulties in Mr. Warburton's account of the jewish theocracy, in respect to it's origin and duration ; and also concerning the exercise of an extraordinary providence over particular persons, as well as over states in general. On the former question, Dr. Sykes vindicates Dr. Spencer, who had " conceived that the gradual declension of the theocracy, began in the Israelites demand of a king ; that it was more lessened when God called Saul and David to the head of affairs ; that under Solomon it became nearer to it's cessation. And in proof of this, he urges the disuse of the urim and thummim, and such other arguments as shewed there was not such frequent interpositions of an extraordinary providence, as were under the judges, or in Joshua's or in Moses's days : at the same time he contends, that some obscure footsteps of it continued to the last times of their state."

In respect to the exercise of an extraordinary providence over particular persons, as well as over states in general ; so much as relates to the latter, seems to have been pretty well agreed and admitted

admitted by both parties; but, as to particular persons, when it is said, “no transgressor escaped punishment, nor any observer of the law missed his reward,” the account is contrasted by the representation which the scriptures make in several places of the prosperity of the wicked, and the ill success of the good, and which instances remain unanswered, and unanswerable. Mr. Warburton himself seemed so sensible of the difficulties, notwithstanding his endeavour to give his reader some present satisfaction, that in a momentary distrust of his own abilities, he professed to reserve himself for the further discussion of the question.

The last division of the subjects of this volume is “a vindication of Sir Isaac Newton’s chronology.” Dr. Sykes exposes, with great justice and spirit, the contradictory compliments which Mr. Warburton paid that eminent and excellent man; of whom, as he expresses himself in one place, “science and virtue” seemed to be at strife about, which should “render him most illustrious, while they

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“equally

“equally concurred to make him the ornament of human kind.”

Sir Isaac maintained, that Ofiris and Sesostris were only two names for one and the same person, in the history of Egypt; and his chronology is dependent on that circumstance, as far as it is affected by it. Mr. Warburton considered them as two distinct heroes. The evidences which had been produced and received by Sir Isaac, were rejected by Mr. Warburton; while he was disposed to give credit to far inferior testimony; even to the accounts of the egyptian priesthood, “who were masters in their trade,” and who were very justly suspected of forgery by himself. After an inquiry into facts, there follows an examination of six consequences which were produced by Mr. Warburton, as espoused by Sir Isaac, all “contrary to sacred antiquity.” Whereas four of them are the creatures of Mr. Warburton’s imagination, never espoused, never admitted, never mentioned by Sir Isaac Newton. The other two are vindicated, the one as agreeable to history, the other as agreeable to the account in the bible.

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Dr. Sykes readily acknowledges the *Divine legation* to be “ the work of a man of learning and abilities, however inconclusive his reasoning is ;” but leaves to the determination of his reader, the application of a remark of Mr. Warburton’s, “ that
 “ systems, schemes, and hypotheses, all bred
 “ of heat in the warm region of contro-
 “ versy, [or of a wild imagination] will,
 “ like meteors in a troubled sky, each have
 “ it’s turn to blaze and pass away.”

It may not be unentertaining to observe here, what others thought of these combatants, and the questions in dispute between them.

The learned Mr. William Clarke, late chancellor of the church of Chichester, writing to Mr. Bowyer about the year 1744, speaks highly of Dr. Sykes’s advantage over Mr. Warburton in his *Examination* ; and ventures, at the same time, to hazard a conjecture of the probable consequence of the contempt which the party examined had, or affected to have for his examiner. “ I
 “ see,” says he, “ your friend Warburton
 “ is still a hero ; he makes nothing of at-
 “ tacking whole battalions alone : though
 “ he

“ he gives me the most pleasure of any
 “ body, I cannot but say I am in pain for
 “ him. Is there no keeping that fire and
 “ genius within proper limits ? He will
 “ fall, as great men have done before him,
 “ by the things he despised most, Dr. Sykes
 “ and the people. The doctor has outdone
 “ himself, and I am persuaded that he is
 “ right in his three first positions, the
 “ exoteric doctrines, the sense of the old
 “ legislation, and the jewish theocracy ;
 “ and I long to see how the author of the
 “ Divine Legation will disengage himself,
 “ though I expect he will beat up his
 “ quarters, and bear down all before
 “ him.”^e

Mr.

^e See Nichols's *Biographical Anecdotes of Mr. Bowyer*, p. 175. note.—If the curiosity of the reader should be so far excited, as to make him desirous to inquire into Mr. Warburton's political prowess, he may see a curious specimen of his easy disposal of the principalities and powers of this world, exhibited in the invaluable *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, esq.* (vol. ii. p. 497—499.) Mr. Warburton, with only a few strokes of his pen, atchieved exploits against nations, with the same hardiness that he *attacked whole battalions* of polemics. To say the least, this mighty Colossus certainly spoke somewhat lightly and unadvisedly of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Nineveh, and the seven nations of Canaan-
 ites

Mr. Markland writing also to Mr. Bowyer in April 1744, says, " Mr. Clarke has sent
 " me Mr. Warburton's answer to his op-
 " ponents, and Dr. Sykes's *Examination*,
 " &c. the former of which seems to me to
 " have been published chiefly with a design
 " of giving the general review of the argu-
 " ment of the Divine Legation, which is an
 " useful thing, and the latter (Dr. Sykes's)
 " seems to be a fly one. I shall be glad to
 " see an answer, a direct one, to some parts
 " of it." ^f Mr. Markland's opinion seems
 to favour more the adroitness of the exa-
 miner, than the opinions he maintained.
 Nevertheless, be that as it might, he
 thought a direct answer was necessary, and

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certain

ites in the old world; when he said, " he regarded those
 " illustrious societies as no more than *paper and pack-*
 " *thread* thrown into the balance, when God, in his
 " justice, weighs the fate of nations." (See his *Apologetical*
dedication to Dr. Stebbing, in defence of his fast sermon in
 1745.) And it was not a little extraordinary, that Mr.
 Hook, the roman historian, should thence be led to be-
 tray his affection for the arbitrary governments, and
 great monarchies of modern times; for when speaking,
 in a certain conversation, of the foregoing passage, and
 citing it from memory, he understood it to be intended
 to apply to the kingdoms of France and Spain, and
 was interested accordingly.

^f Nichols's *Biog. Anecdotes of Mr. Bowyer*, p. 176.

certain it is that Mr. Markland was a very competent judge; nor was he disappointed in his desire and expectation. In 1745, Mr. Warburton published *Remarks on several occasional reflections: in answer to the reverend doctors Stebbing and Sykes. Serving to explain and justify the two dissertations in the Divine Legation, concerning the command to Abraham to offer up his son; and the nature of the jewish theocracy; objected to by those learned writers.* Part. ii. and last.

In the concluding part of these *Remarks*, Mr. Warburton insists much on the milkiness of his temper and disposition; it is to be lamented that he had no evidence to offer in the support of his defence. He most assuredly received much rough language from his adversaries; but he amply paid all convicted, and even suspected offenders, in one common coin, both principal and interest: and it was not seldom that he dealt out, from the same mint, much illiberal abuse upon some of the most learned and respectable characters and scholars of his time, only because they presumed to differ from his system of legislation. His language to Mr. Tillard, “who
had

had the character of a studious, honest, good man," was most reprehensible, not to say unpardonable : ^s and in these same *Remarks*, out of the abundance of his charity and good manners, he says, " I chuse to let pass, without any chastisement, such impotent railers as Dr. Richard Grey, and one Bate, a zany to a mountebank." ^h

Mr. Peters was another learned gentleman, whom he complimented with the contemptuous appellation of the " Cornish critic." ⁱ

Mr. Bott, rector of Spixworth in Norfolk, in a letter to Mr. Masters, between the years 1744, and 1746, speaking of Mr. Warburton, with whom he was himself also engaged in controversy, and of Dr. Sykes's *Examination*, writes, " however, in Sykes he has caught a tartar." And again, " I am glad Sykes's answer meets with the approbation among you, it certainly

^s See *Advertisement* to the *Appendix* to the second edition of the second vol. of *Divine Legation*, and Sykes's *Examination*, p. 6.

^h See *Remarks*, &c. part ii. p. 245.

ⁱ See *Divine legation*. 4th edit. vol. v. p. 18.—cited also by bishop Lowth in his *Letter*, &c. p. 23. note (q.)

“ tainly deserves ; and I should be glad to
 “ know in particular, what is generally said
 “ about the last part, which defends Sir
 “ Isaac’s egyptian chronology. A learned
 “ man [Dr. Shuckford,] a great admirer
 “ of the knight, and who has been long
 “ deeply engaged in the study of chrono-
 “ logy, says, it is certain the old knight
 “ knew nothing of ancient times ; *credet*
 “ *non ego* : and adds, that if Warburton
 “ knows any thing of ancient chronology,
 “ he will here have the advantage of his
 “ antagonist.” *

Mr. Warburton animadverted upon Dr.
 Sykes’s *Examination*, in his usual manner,
 in the before-mentioned *Remarks in answer*
to the reverend doctors Stebbing and Sykes.
 Of the four heads of the *Examination*, he
 omitted to make any particular reply to
 three of them ; observing, with an arro-
 gance till that time almost peculiar to him-
 self, “ how much Dr. Sykes had to thank
 “ him for, when instead of exposing the
 “ other three parts of his book, which
 “ abound with such beauties [mistakes] in
 “ every page, he had confined himself to
 “ this,

* From Mr. Masters’s letter.

“ this, [the theocracy of the jews,] where
 “ the natural obscurity of the subject hides
 “ both his blunders and his blushes ?” ¹

A man who felt less sensibly than Dr. Sykes did, the imputations insinuated in the preceding language, would not have been silent, while he was persuaded that he had not deserved it. Our author therefore replied in (LII.) *A defence of the Examination of Mr. Warburton's Account of the theocracy of the jews ; being an answer to his Remarks, so far as they concern Dr. Sykes.* (1746.) Some pages are employed, as might be expected, in observing on the manner of Mr. Warburton, and the little or no satisfaction afforded by his *Remarks*, as far as they incidentally had respect to the questions, relating to the conduct of the old legislators, and the double doctrine of the old philosophers ; the former of which he certainly was more immediately concerned to make good. Dr. Sykes then proceeds to the direct subject of his *Defence*, and observing the order prescribed by Mr. Warburton, he divides his book into xiv distinct sections.

“ The

¹ See the *Remarks*, &c. part ii. p. 154, note.

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 “ know in particular, what is generally said
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“ The

¹ See the *Remarks*, &c. part ii. p. 154, note.

“The obscurity of the subject” before observed, and admitted by Mr. Warburton, may indeed be pleaded in excuse for his own blunders, so far as they were involuntary, and to apologize for his blushes were ridiculous; but this very consciousness of the difficulties in the way of a demonstration of his hypothesis, places his extreme presumption beyond the reach of a charitable construction: and the superior ability of the examiner has shewn, that the ground of the Divine legation of Moses, taken by Mr. Warburton, is untenable and indefensible. Dr. Sykes speaking of that work in general, says, he “owns that he never could see the truth of the premises of his demonstration made out: nor had ever met with one single person, that thought them proved.” And, with a generous concern at being led to state a fact so unfavourable to the learned demonstrator’s labours, he adds, “forgive me this provocation.”^m

Nor is this opinion to be placed to the account of any defect in Dr. Sykes organs of vision, merely because his glass was pointed towards Mr. Warburton. The sentiments

^m See his *Defence*, &c. 16.

sentiments of the learned are known very generally to look the same way. Few learned theological books have been more universally read in their day, than Mr. Warburton's *Divine legation*, and still fewer of those which have been so much noticed, have been so soon neglected, disregarded, and forgotten. Bishop Lowth is decisive; ⁿ and I remember to have been, some

ⁿ Bishop Lowth says of bishop Warburton's *Divine Legation*, that, "it would be no presumption, even in
 " a young student in theology, to undertake to give a
 " better, that is, a more satisfactory and irrefragable
 " demonstration of it, in five pages, than he has done in
 " five volumes."—*Letter to the right reverend author of the Divine Legation*. 4th edit. 1766, p. 12. And this opinion of bishop Lowth, who only presumed upon the insufficiency of the *Divine Legation*, is in perfect agreement with the estimation made by Mr. Wilkes, of the author's inexpertness in clearing up difficulties. "I
 " have been said," writes he, "to have my doubts. I
 " really have none. If I had, that orthodox bishop [Warburton] would surely be able to remove them; only
 " I should fear, that for every one of mine he carried
 " away, he would leave ten of his own behind with me." See *Complete collection of genuine papers, letters, &c. in the case of John Wilkes, esq.* 1767. p. 67.---Now, should the partial friendship of bishop Hurd induce him to be the editor of the entire works of bishop Warburton, which is very credibly reported to be the case, it will be

some years ago, in company with three very learned and respectable dignitaries of the established church, none of whom were in any degree to be suspected of heretical pravity; when the conversation, turning upon bishop Warburton, they agreed in one opinion, that it was, to say the least, a fair question, whether his writings had more served the cause of infidelity, or of revelation?

But to return: Mr. Warburton answered to the *longing*, if not to the full *expectation* of Mr. Clarke, as mentioned in his letter to Mr. Bowyer, for he “whipped the “examiner at the cart’s tail in the notes to “*Divine legation*, the ordinary place of his “literary executions,” as bishop Lowth expresses himself on another occasion. ° And therein he fails not to incorporate the language

no impeachment of the judgment of the public, nor any loss to the cause of revelation, if the volumes are left to sleep in silence, in such general repositories where his lordship’s generosity shall place them; even though they should be accompanied by a *Dissertation on the Delicacy of Friendship*.

° See bishop Lowth’s *Letter*, &c. p. 4. And *Divine legation*. vol. ii. 5th edit. pages 104, 189; and vol. iv. 4th edit. pages 338, and seq. 267, 287, 291, 294, 295, 324—327, and 336.

guage of his *Remarks*, and, as if it were in compliance with an orderly custom to preserve a charter, to talk to his learned adversary of “ the trade of answering,” and, correspondent therewith, to stile him “ an answerer by profession ;” compliments these, which he had repeatedly bestowed upon his opponents. Doctors Stebbing and Sykes, says he, “ had been answerers from their early youth ; and, as the heads of opposite parties, never yet agreed in any one thing, but in writing against the *Divine legation*. Here they went to work as brethren ; and indeed, not without reason ; the book was manifestly calculated to spoil their trade.” ^p And in the very title pages of these *Remarks* addressed to these gentlemen, he applies to them the following description from Virgil :

Arcades ambo,
Et cantare pares, et RESPONDERE parati.

In the process of time, the tables were turned upon bishop Warburton, and his second, archdeacon Town, who had assisted him, at his own instance and persuasion, ^a in the

^p See *Remarks*, &c. part ii. p. 5.

^a See *Divine Legation*, vol. iii, 4th edit. *preface*, p. lxxix.

the examination of his adversaries ; and whose fate it was to be somewhat hardly dealt with, when he was undeservedly dignified with the title of his “ literary scavenger,” by a late professor in the university of Oxford. ^r

The year 1746 threatened to involve us in something more than polemic controversy. The existence of the protestant religion in this kingdom depended upon the event of a civil war : and as it was the policy of the papists, at that time, to soften down the minds of the protestants to an easy and patient admission of popery, for papists would have succeeded to the possession of power, if the adventurous enterprise of the pretender had proved successful ; so it was the duty of the protestant clergy to call the attention of the people to the principles of their religion ; and to lay before them the inseparable connexion between religious and civil liberty. The time was critical ; and neither party can be reproached with having been inactive. In the year 1743, there was published, by the then titular bishop

^r See bishop Lowth's *Letter*, &c. p. 7.

shop of London, a second edition of a short tract, entitled, *A vindication of the roman catholics ; being their most solemn declaration of their utter abhorrence of the following tenets vulgarly laid at their door.* This piece had been originally published in the beginning of the reign of James II. and was artfully calculated to recommend and introduce popery into this country, and to make it appear mild and gentle, and fair as truth itself. This vindication accidentally falling into Dr. Sykes's hands, early in the year 1746, and before the suppression of the last rebellion, he was induced, at that juncture, to enter upon (LIII.) *An inquiry how far papists ought to be treated here as good subjects ; and also, how far they were chargeable with the tenets commonly imputed to them.*

The title which the papists have to a free toleration in a protestant country, is made to rest upon it's proper and only reasonable foundation, *i. e.* upon their giving the same security, with others, of their allegiance to our government, in return for their protection. This condition is here fairly and candidly examined and defended. And, it surely is to the credit of the present age,

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that

that by a late act of parliament, (18 Geo. III. c. 66.) several penal clauses in the former laws against papists are repealed, upon the condition of their taking an oath of allegiance and supremacy to the crown of Great-Britain; and which is so fully and unequivocally expressed, as to answer, as it should seem, all the demands of Dr. Sykes's arguments; and was, as I understand, very generally complied with by the roman catholics. The warm and angry resentment which was unhappily shewn against that law, two years after it had been enacted, and which lighted up such dreadful conflagrations in our capital, in June 1780, will be a deserved and lasting disgrace upon the infatuated and intolerant spirit of the instigators of the phrensy of the populace.

In the latter part of this pamphlet, Dr. Sykes examines, with great precision and acuteness, some of those religious tenets which papists have affected to disclaim. In the course of this examination he has detected much disingenuous ambiguity of expression, much shameless cavil, and not a few notorious falsities, when stripped of the artful disguise thrown over them by
the

the fair and plausible words in which they are sometimes cloathed. But the religious opinions and principles of popery, which do not interfere with the civil government of our protestant state, are, and ought to be the subject of argument only, and not of penal laws; for such opinions he “would not hurt a hair of their heads,” because it is most clear, as he also asserts, that “what is seated in the will is not the object of force, but of reason and persuasion; and the instant religion ceases to be voluntary, it loses it's existence.”

The publication of the last mentioned tract concerning the papists, was soon followed by a sequel. Having first resolved the question, “how far papists ought to be treated *here* as good subjects,” because of the insufficient security which they then gave to government; Dr. Sykes proceeded to inquire further into the principles and state of the penal laws in which they were concerned, and to examine into (LIV.) *The reasonableness of mending and executing the laws against papists.* The justice and reasonableness of this part of the question,

should *now* seem to be in favour of a more temperate conduct towards such papists as submit to take the oath prescribed in the late act. An oath which gives to government every security which it is possible for men to give, that they renounce those offensive and dangerous principles which were heretofore, with great reason, considered as inseparable from the *religious* opinions of popery, and are justly the objects of penal laws in a protestant community.

Dr. Sykes was a thorough and hearty friend to liberty of conscience, and the free toleration of every religious opinion, not inimical to the constitutional rights and civil liberties of our country. Therefore it is more than presumable, that, consistent with such principles, he would have been entirely friendly to the late relief granted to the papists upon the stipulated condition in the late act. My reason for such supposition is, because the condition, *i. e.* the oath now required, besides being a test of allegiance, amounts also to such a renunciation of the spirit of persecution as he requires; and further, it sufficiently includes the oath of supremacy, for which he also argues; and
directly

directly answers to his declaration afterwards,—“ If,” says he, “ a proper test can be thought of, better than the present, by which they may renounce all foreign power, authority, jurisdiction, pre-eminence ecclesiastical or spiritual, over this realm, let it in God’s name be admitted.” How far the late act answers to this requisition, will best appear by the perusal of the oath directed to be taken by all papists, before they shall claim any benefit from it.^s For my own part, I am persuaded,

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that

^s The form of the oath is as follows: (see Burn’s *Justice*, 15th edit. 1785, title POPERY, vol. iv. p. 21.)

“ I A. B. do sincerely promise and swear, That I
 “ will be faithful and bear true allegiance to his ma-
 “ jesty king *George* the third, and him will defend, to
 “ the utmost of my power, against all conspiracies
 “ and attempts whatever that shall be made against his
 “ person, crown, or dignity. And I will do my ut-
 “ most endeavour to disclose and make known to his
 “ majesty, his heirs, and successors, all treasons and
 “ traiterous conspiracies which may be formed against
 “ him or them. And I do faithfully promise to main-
 “ tain, support, and defend, to the utmost of my power,
 “ the succession of the crown in his majesty’s family, a-
 “ gainst any person or persons whatsoever; hereby utterly
 “ renouncing and abjuring any obedience or allegiance
 “ unto

that the security now given by the papists
is abundantly sufficient to justify the repeal
of the remaining penal laws, which were
not

“ unto the person taking upon himself the style and
“ title of *Prince of Wales*, in the life-time of his fa-
“ ther, and who, since his death, is said to have as-
“ sumed the style and title of *King of Great Britain*,
“ by the name of *Charles the third*, and to any person
“ claiming or pretending a right to the crown of these
“ realms. And I do swear, that I do reject and detest,
“ as an unchristian and impious position, That it is
“ lawful to murder or destroy any person or persons
“ whatsoever, for or under pretence of their being he-
“ retics ; and also that unchristian and impious prin-
“ ciple, That no faith is to be kept with heretics. I
“ further declare, that it is no article of my faith, and
“ that I do renounce, reject, and abjure, the opinion,
“ That princes excommunicated by the Pope and
“ council, or by any authority of the see of *Rome*, or
“ by any authority whatsoever, may be deposed or mur-
“ dered by their subjects, or any person whatsoever.
“ And I do declare, that I do not believe that the pope
“ of *Rome*, or any other foreign prince, prelate, state,
“ or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any temporal
“ or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-emi-
“ nence, directly or indirectly, within this realm.
“ And I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess,
“ testify, and declare, That I do make this declaration,
“ and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary
“ sense of the words of this oath ; without any evasion,
“ equivocation, or mental reservation whatever, and
“ without

not affected by the late act, and which continue a reproach to our statute book, and the principles of just legislation : and can, at this day, be left there only in compliment to the indolence of our governors, or in accommodation to popular prejudices.

The opinion of the late Mr. Hollis concurred with those of John Milton and Lord Somers against the toleration of popery ; and the acute and discerning editors of the Hollisian Memoirs are very strenuous in the same sentiment. Mr. Hollis, however, had acceded to a plan of toleration of papists, without the security which they now give to government. ^c The editors have indeed stated some objections to the toleration of popery according to the

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late

“ without any dispensation already granted by the pope,
 “ or any authority of the see of *Rome*, or any person
 “ whatever ; and without thinking that I am, or can
 “ be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this
 “ declaration, or any part thereof, although the pope,
 “ or any other persons or authority whatsoever, shall
 “ dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it
 “ was null or void.”

^c See *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, esq.* vol. i. pages 359, 360 ; and the *Appendix*, N^o. li. p. 706.

late act; nevertheless it is granted by them, that “ to relieve them [popish priests] “ from the severity of that penalty, [im- “ prisonment for life,] was an act of huma- “ nity, highly becoming the principles of a “ protestant senate, and, in that view, praise- “ worthy, and of good report; and if the “ delinquents under that law could prevail “ with themselves to take the prescribed oath “ *bona fide*, they might with propriety be “ entitled to the indulgence of the new act “ in their favour; because, in that case, their “ civil allegiance was a separate consideration “ from their spiritual obligations.” ^u

On the suppression of the last rebellion, a day was appointed for a general thanksgiving. Dr. Sykes, being at that time in residence on his prebend of Winchester, was called upon to preach in the cathedral there, on that occasion, the ninth day of October, 1746. And the *Sermon* (LV.) was afterwards “ published at the request of the mayor and corporation” of that city.

The

^u See *Memoirs*, &c. vol. i. p. 460—464.

The text is taken from Psalm cxvi. 7, 8, 9. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* After explaining the general purport of the psalm, and applying the language of a grateful heart on deliverance from danger, to the situation of his hearers, on the suppression of the rebellion, he states briefly the blessings of liberty enjoyed in this island, and the more than probable loss of every thing dear and valuable to us, if success had attended the invasion of the pretender, from the very avowed and necessary principles of his pretension.

The observation that he came to “claim his own,” is answered by stating the want of evidence of his right, and the different nature of right to dominion founded on consent or compact; and the right to property arising from labour and industry, and also from the nature of a trust, and the nature of property.

The claim to dominion, says he, was founded either on conquest or indefeasible right, and both are fatal to liberty
and

and property: and that claim was unnaturally supported by the pretender's followers, as they had suffered no injury in their fortunes, liberties, or persons.

The plea that opposition to the prince in possession is only the tribute of allegiance to the sovereign excluded from his right, presumes the insufficiency of the legislature to provide for the safety of the people, and that the mismanagement of a trust may not incur deprivation, and the like.

If the principles of education are pleaded in excuse; it is replied, that a prince educated in bad principles, is more to be dreaded than a private person, in proportion to his power to do mischief. And the argument of men's acting honestly according to their principles, is considered as an insufficient plea to the parties injured, while they are sufferers; and the many who engage against right principles, from being of desperate fortunes, or the like causes, being equally mischievous, are equally objects of justice, and ought to be amenable to it. And as the destruction of protestantism, and introduction of popery

pery would have been another certain consequence of the success of the rebellion, he concludes that the then present state of religious and civil liberty should induce the grateful spirit of the psalmist, in thanks to God, the king, the prince, and the people.

The following year, 1747, Dr. Sykes resumed the consideration of the double doctrine of the ancients, which had been the second head of his *Examination* of Mr. Warburton's Account, and which, together with two others, he had excused himself the trouble of answering out of pure kindness, and in order to spare Dr. Sykes "his blunders and his blushes." A friend of Mr. Warburton's, however, undertook the task of further pursuing the subject of the double doctrine with less reluctance; and, as is very apparent, not without Mr. Warburton's being first fully let into the secret, for he declared himself to be "willing that those of his opinions there debated, should stand or fall by the strength or invalidity of his defence." The title of this piece, in which Mr. Warburton is
so

so ready to place so much confidence, and to which he prefixed a preface by himself, was, *A critical inquiry into the opinions and practices of the ancient philosophers.* To this work therefore Dr. Sykes replied in (LVI.) *A vindication of the account of the double doctrine of the ancients.* Wherein he has shewn the wrong statement of the question, upon which the inquirer, and consequently Mr. Warburton, affected to join issue; the superstructure, therefore, which is built thereon, falls of course, for it is made sufficiently to appear, that the inquirer “has not produced one single instance, where the words *esoteric* or *exoteric* are made use of, or applied to the doctrines taught openly, but not believed; or privately and in secret, because believed. Nor has he cited one author on this occasion, whom he has not either misrepresented, or made some inconsequent deduction from. And if this,” says he, “be the defence which Mr. Warburton is willing to stand or fall by, *Let the doctrine of the Divine legation be deemed chimerical and groundless*, or not, as the evidence on this point now appears upon this debate.”

And

And then, by way of challenge to the further investigation of the first head of his former *Examination*, wherein the very principle and corner stone of the Divine legation were destroyed, he observes, “only let me add, that supposing this point of the double doctrine to be given up to him, yet his demonstration of the Divine legation must fail, since he has not proved that any of the legislators of old, much less that all of them, made the doctrine of a future state, in it's full extent, either the preface or the sanction of their laws, more than Moses has done.”

CHAPTER VII.

His “ Essay on sacrifices,” and share in the controversy which followed Dr. Middleton’s Free inquiry into the miraculous powers. 1748—1752.

THE subject of sacrifices has been much examined ; neither learning nor diligence have been spared in the inquiry, but it necessarily remains involved in difficulties. Many candid and liberal-minded men, well informed in biblical and all ancient literature, entertain different opinions ; and probably the circumstances of the case may continue this uncertainty to a much later period of time. The knowledge of the nature and design of sacrifices is important, as being so immediately connected with the right understanding of many passages of scripture ; for, as Dr. Sykes very naturally observes, in his *preface* to the work before us, “ it may appear to us very disagreeable, and odd, to offer up animal sacrifices unto
God :

God: but the universal practice of the world shews that it did not appear so to them of old. If one can assign a rational ground of this way of worship," says he, "that is all I aim at: and since all agree, that there is no express assertion in the sacred writings, that this mode of religious worship was instituted or appointed by God at the beginning, I cannot think that they argue right, who infer from the disagreeableness, or the oddness, or even our not being able to understand the reason or usefulness of sacrificing, that therefore it must have been originally a divine institution."

The title of this publication of our author's, is, (LVII.) *An essay on the nature, design, and origin of sacrifices.* (1748.) A work which affords much valuable acquisition to theological literature, but would have been more useful, had it been thrown into some form more easy of access and application; or if the disposition of it's several parts had been more readily placed within the distinct view of the eye. The difficulties in the reasoning on this subject are admitted, but not to the seclusion of inquiry. "If one cannot arrive at absolute certainty,"

certainty," says the essayist, "in so obscure and difficult a point, we must be content with probability: or if one cannot be sure of the ground of a custom, by reason of it's remote antiquity, one ought not to reject the light one may have, because one has not the brightness of the mid-day sun."

In the definition of sacrifice, our author observes, that "whatever is given or offered in a solemn manner immediately to God, so as that part of it, or the whole is consumed, is what is meant by the word sacrifice. Whether it be upon an altar, or what is used instead of an altar, whether it be by fire, or in any other manner, is not material: but there must be a gift, or oblation of it, whatever the subject, or matter may be; and it must be offered to God; and there must be a consumption of it. If a heap of stones, or the common earth, or a private hearth was used to burn a piece of flesh on, that makes no difference: or if a libation was made, and the wine, or whatever it was, was poured upon the earth, or into the sea: or if the entrails of an animal were cast into the sea, as an oblation to the
 gods

gods of the sea, it was a proper sacrifice, provided the oblation was consumed in the proper manner."

And it is further understood, "that sacrifices offered without moral virtues, were always looked upon by God as of no worth, or value: but when they were accompanied with an upright heart, and there was a mind rightly disposed towards God in him that brought his sacrifices, then they were such as God esteemed; such as he commanded, required, and expected." And accordingly, "as obedience to moral duties, and rectitude was always the primary thing required by God, so it is observable, that in offering sacrifices, such rites and ceremonies always attended them as implied or manifested the moral disposition of the mind." And furthermore, it is observed, "that sacrifices were not only attended with repentance and confession, and address to God by prayer, as being in his presence, but they were *fæderal rites*, and implied mens entering into friendship with God; or if they had violated friendship with God, by violating the stipulation entered into, then sacrifice implied a renewal of friendship, or a recon-

ciliation with him, or a return to that state from which the offender had departed."

The practice of the egyptians, jews, greeks and romans; and all the several kinds of sacrifices, as the burnt offering, peace-offering, sin-offering, trespass-offering, meat-offering, and drink-offering, in all the variety of circumstances under which they were made, together with the rites, and ceremonies, and distinctions which were observed, are considered, as the subject or digression suggests. These accounts it is impossible to abridge, without injury to the evidence which is brought in support of facts. But it would be to be wanting in justice, both to the subject and the writer, to omit to give some extracts from his account of the mistaken representations of sacrifices; and these extracts may be the more satisfactory to the reader, as they will not only let us into the light thrown upon the subject by our author, who considers the "*rationale* of sacrifices as dark," but may serve to satisfy our minds in the most reasonable account of them that is probably extant.

It

It has been thought, as he cites from Outram, that sacrifices were “ *external signs and sacred rites, by which the desires of the people were expressed, and had a view to the same end as prayers openly pronounced, or thanksgivings had.* i. e. sacrifice was the same thing as prayer or thanksgiving, only expressed by external signs, instead of words. But this” adds our author, “ was neither a just, nor a full representation of the fact. Sacrifices were always accompanied with prayers or thanksgivings; and therefore were not external rites by which prayer or thanks were intended to be signified, or the desires of the people were intended to be expressed. They were indeed significant rites; and they expressed, in their way, what was principally intended, which was friendship and reconciliation to God by eating at his table.”

“ A second thing which has chiefly contributed to a wrong representation is, that they were instituted as expiations for sins; that the rite of laying hands on the head of the victim, was to imply a real and true translation of sin upon the substitute.”

“ But though the weak or the ignorant might imagine something of an actual translation of guilt from the offender to the victim, or that the victim bore the offences of the criminal, or that it was an equivalent, or a compensation, for the crimes of the offender, yet when this notion prevailed among the jews, and they offered sacrifices under such a mistake, we find the prophets severely condemning them, and reproaching them with their false opinions about the design of the law. Whilst they adhered to that moral disposition which was intended primarily to be kept up, all was right and proper. But the instant they departed from that, and depended on external service, and imagined that to have been instituted by God as a means of pleasing him, they left the end and design of sacrifices, and established a righteousness of their own, but did not submit to the righteousness of God.”

“ It is certainly true that the prevailing notion among mankind was, that sacrifices did in themselves expiate sins: they were equivalents, or at least a sort of compensations, though not of full and equal value,
given

given to the gods as atonements for the crimes that any one had committed. They were things that appeased an angry God, and made him propitious and kind. And hence it was that weak people imagined that the priest made a proper atonement for the sins of such or such offenders, or for the people, or for themselves, by these external rites: and hence it is, that we so frequently meet with *expiations*, *lustrations*, and all those ceremonies which were deemed to purge, to cleanse, to purify, to make free from guilt, and from the punishment due to crimes."

"The imputing to sacrifices, and to external rites, what was wholly owing to the moral disposition of the mind, is so much inconsistent with the reason of the thing, that we find in scripture, sacrifices sometimes treated as if they had never been required or commanded by God."

"What then is the meaning of the words, expiation, atonement, propitiation, and such like terms, usually annexed to sacrifices, and which seem to imply an effect produced in God by means of sacrifice? Or, what is the meaning of those

places which occur so frequent, that the priest shall make an atonement for such or such offenders? Why does not the offender himself make an atonement by his repentance, and return to a right state of mind?"

In order to explain this, he observes, "that to make atonement for sins is, to do something, by means of which a man obtains pardon of them: and in case this be done by the oblation of a sacrifice, then is atonement made by sacrifice. But then pardon was never obtained by sacrifice alone, but as it was attended with a right disposition of mind; and pardon may be, and has been obtained by a right disposition of mind alone, without the concurrence of a sacrifice. What then was the use or design of the sacrifice? The true answer to this is, that sacrifice was designed as a mode of engaging in *friendship*, or as a desire to be reinstated in *friendship*. But then, unless it was attended with such circumstances as shewed a right disposition of mind, conformable to the mind of him who loves truth in the inward parts, it was impossible that the offerer could become a friend of God. The victim therefore, or the blood of the victim, or millions of

of

hecatombs, or ten thousands of rivers of oil, can never of themselves make an atonement; but it must be, as the sacrifices constantly were to be, attended with their proper concomitants, which will indeed make in the strictest sense an *atonement*."

"But then," say some, "if prayer, or confession of sins, or the good moral disposition of men, be the thing that makes God propitious, whence is it that the law imputes so much to blood? *The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.* (Levit. xvii. 11.) Here the atonement is imputed not to the morals of the man, but to the blood of the victim; as if nothing else could answer that end, that being given for the purpose of *atonement*."

"Now as sacrifice was the customary external visible mode by which the internal acts of the mind were expressed, hence that was imputed to sacrifice, which was owing to what sacrifice signified. The customs of the world had made sacrifice the ordinary way of addressing God: it

put the offerer in mind of confessing his sins ; and upon desiring reconciliation with God, and being restored to his favour ; or of being admitted into friendship with him. No wonder then that *that* was imputed commonly to the blood of the victim, which was the real effect of solemn prayer and a purified heart, since the one was the external and visible sign of the other."

" Where a custom was universal, as it was to offer sacrifices, and a law was given suited to such custom, and by that means sacrifices were established, the people would go on to sacrifice ; and they would express their repentance and their desire of pardon and favour with God, in terms suited to the established way of worship. And as this custom of sacrificing was spread every where, God in his wisdom would not abolish this manner of worship, but laid hold of it to keep his people, a holy people, separate from the rest of mankind, and free from the superstitions of the world : and this he did in such a manner, as would most certainly have its due effect. The jews therefore were permitted in *a certain measure* to use such customs as were universal ;

fal; and at the same time, by having a peculiar institution different from their neighbours, they were kept from their idolatries, and were made to serve the great ends of providence in the world. It would therefore be the natural language to say, that *blood maketh atonement*; and where the general form of worship was by *shedding blood*, to say, that *without blood shedding there is no remission.*"

"Another notion which has contributed not a little to mislead men in their consideration of the *jewish* sacrifices is, that they think they were appointed merely in opposition to the practices of their neighbours."

"But there seems to be no foundation for this opinion in scripture; nor would such a notion have been thought of, had the intent and design of sacrifices been considered. The materials of which sacrifices were made, were all of *tame* animals; they were either of the quadruped kind, bullocks, sheep, goats; or of the fowl kind, such were turtles and young pigeons; or of the fruits of the earth, as bread, wine, oil; and, for certain purposes, frankincense. Sacri-
fices

fices were all of such things as were usually eaten by the jews, and were in common practice for the purposes of making or restoring friendships : and therefore they were applied to keep up *friendship* betwixt God and men, as they were applied for that purpose betwixt man and man."

"A fourth thing which has led men into mistakes about the nature of sacrifices is, that they have considered them as *mulcts* or *finēs* at which sins were rated."

"But it is very observable, (1.) that sacrifices are never called by that name, nor are they in scripture represented as *mulcts*. The jews had their words by which they were wont to express *amercements* or *mulcts*; but yet they never were applied in scripture to sacrifices, either in general, or to any particular species of them. (2.) Had they been designed as *mulcts*, it is probable they would have been levied in some other manner. (3.) And supposing sacrifices are required in cases where there is no fault, but only mere accidental misfortunes, and those such as could not be avoided; it would then be unjust to demand a *mulct*, or what may come under the

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the denomination of any sort of punishment. (4.) Sometimes the law appointed certain fixed penalties, and did not add any sacrifice, but only ordered satisfaction to be made to the injured party. (5.) Also many of the sacrifices offered by the jews were *vows* and *voluntary* offerings; and therefore they could not come under the notion of mulcts. Their eucharistic sacrifices were given to God as the fountain of all good, as the giver of all things; and whether the offerer begged of God to grant him what he wanted and desired, or thanked him for what he had received, the sacrifice he offered proceeded from his own choice, and free gift. (6.) Some sacrifices that were expressly enjoined, cannot possibly be considered as mulcts. The passover was as properly a sacrifice as any other, but this could not be required as a mulct, since it was the commemoration of a general deliverance; and instituted to keep up a remembrance of a mercy bestowed, or shewed to the nation of the jews. Lastly; as some sacrifices were expressly appointed for a certain end, as the passover, and others were free-will offerings; so others still were

were brought, where there was not so much as error, nor accidental misfortune, much less was there any fault, or crime in the offerer."

After these general arguments against the mistaken representations of the nature of sacrifices, which are drawn out more at large in the *Essay*, to which recourse must be had for further satisfaction; Dr. Sykes proceeds "to examine into the meaning of some passages of scripture, wherein sacrifices seem to be asserted not to have been instituted by God, even under the *mosaic* dispensation itself." He states also some objections, grounded on apparently counter declarations, and resolves both in agreement with each other.

Dr. Sykes was ever wont to press the duty of free inquiry, and to speak with modesty of his own labours to promote it. In other words, he is like the traveller who, though well versed in geography, is inquisitive after the best and safest road to the end of his journey, and not as one, who arrogantly presuming upon his general knowledge, is inclined, through indolence or self-conceit, to hazard the loss
of

of his way in some dark, however much frequented path. “ I do not,” concludes he, “ design to enter into any consequences which may follow, or seem to follow, from what has been said. The subject certainly has it’s difficulties; and if what is here said should give the reader any light; or should assist him in the understanding the scriptures, (the book which, of all books, ought the most to be studied without prejudice, and which is too often read with the strongest biases in favour of pre-conceived opinions;) If the reader, I say, receives any assistance from what has been said towards understanding the scriptures, let him use it to the glory of God, and the good of mankind.”

The next following work of our author’s had reference to the question agitated between Dr. Conyers Middleton and his adversaries, concerning the continuation of the miraculous powers in the christian church. Mr. Jackson, Mr. Dodwell, Mr. Church, Mr. Whiston, and an anonymous associate on the same side, all agreed in rejecting Dr. Middleton’s and Mr. Locke’s
 opinion,

opinion, that miracles ceased with, or about the end of the apostolic age; but, unfortunately, no two of them were of the same mind, *how long* they continued after that time. Dr. Sykes did not formally enter into this question, but proposed two others, as proper to be previously considered, viz. “What are the grounds upon which the credibility of miracles, *in general*, is founded?” And, “upon what grounds the miracles of the gospel, *in particular*, are credible?”

The title of this tract is, (LVIII.) *Two questions, previous to Dr. Middleton's Free inquiry, impartially considered.* (1750.)

The object of the former question is to shew, “that human testimony, how much soever it is valued in common cases, has not an equal deference paid to it in miraculous ones.” And this difference of credit given to different cases is illustrated in the several instances of legendary and historical accounts, variously circumstanced in respect to the thing to be believed, as also in regard to the channel through which it is represented, or delivered to us.

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The second question which is proposed for investigation and solution, adverts to the particular credit of the miracles of the gospel. The singular credibility arising from the probity and integrity of the men who bear attestation to many facts done by Jesus and his apostles, from the whole circumstances of their lives; from their being eye-witnesses, from their having sufficient information, and a disposition to relate the truth. The testimony of the enemies of christianity, as well as the friends of the gospel, to the facts related. And (thirdly) the very history of the gospel being the completion of prophecy. These are principally insisted upon, and are arguments in favour of the credibility of the miracles of the gospel, which lose nothing when managed by the skilful and judicious pen of our author.

At the conclusion of this tract is annexed *A dissertation on Mark xvi. 17, 18.* which is written in the true manner of those, who endeavour, with Mr. Locke, to make scripture it's own interpreter, and consistent with itself. The passage in St. Mark is,—*And these signs shall follow them*
that

that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils, (demons;) they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. The meaning of which, together with the context, he thus resolves: “Go and teach all nations, gentiles as well as jews, and preach the gospel to every creature. No distinction is, or will be, made betwixt them; but whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and shall partake of the holy ghost (spirit.) And these signs shall follow them that believe, be they jews or gentiles: In my name shall devils (demons) be cast out, and miracles of all sorts shall be performed by both jews and gentiles,—in attestation of that great truth, that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, in such manner as shall seem most proper, and according to the good will of God.”

The next year Dr. Dodwell published his *Full and final reply to Mr. Toll's Defence, and Dr. Middleton's Free inquiry*; (1751.) and employed a large preface on the consideration of the credibility of miracles in general, “not only on account of it's near connection with the main point in dispute,

dispute, but because it had been considered by another writer in such a manner, as might be thought to prejudice the evidence offered for the continuance of miraculous powers in the primitive church." Dr. Dodwell also remarks upon some of the arguments of our author on the second question; but he directs his pen in a liberal manner, and with good temper. He readily acknowledges the merit of Dr. Sykes's arguments, and, but for their bearing hard, ultimately, and in their consequences, against the ascription of miracles to the three first centuries of the church, seems to have been disposed to agree pretty generally with our author. "For," says he, "the variety, and the reality of our Saviour's miraculous works are set forth in a very strong, convincing, and comprehensive manner." And again, he writes, "It is not a matter of choice that I differ in so many (other) particulars from a gentleman, who, in my poor judgment, has so well treated that part of the argument, which respects the completion of the prophecies."

Dr. Dodwell's preface in defence of the evidence which had been offered for the continuance of the miraculous powers in the primitive church, against Dr. Sykes's considerations on the two previous questions, brought our author forward to reply, in a *second part* of his former publication. He had before considered the question of the credibility of miracles in general, and the abundant sufficiency of the evidence for the miracles of the gospel: but he now professedly took the ground, which he had before only glanced upon at a distance, and which Dr. Dodwell had made the more necessary by his preface. And to which he was also importuned by the anonymous writer of *An impartial inquiry, what is the difference between the miracles done by our Saviour, and those that are pretended to have been done, since those times; so as to make the one credible, and the other incredible?* In a letter addressed to the author of *Two questions, &c.* (1750.)

In this *second part* of the (LIX.) *Two questions, previous to Dr. Middleton's Free inquiry.* (1752.) "the evidence for the miracles of the primitive church, is fully
examined

examined into: and the miracles of the gospel are shewn to have sure marks of credibility." But to enter into the contents, would be to engage in particulars, which would be uninteresting in this place. The controversy is well known, and the opinions of men are not now so much divided as before the commencement of this examination of the subject. Dr. Dodwell found in Dr. Sykes, a powerful and liberal adversary; and the friends of that side of the question which was supported by Dr. Middleton, have to thank him for raising so able a coadjutor to their assistance.

"When the miracles of our Saviour and the apostles," says Dr. Sykes, "were once secured, the question about the continuance of miracles in the church, might be considered as a matter of less importance; or as an affair of literature, which might be freely canvassed or discussed." But there were certain persons who not only did not admit this consequence, but who gave evident tokens of their displeasure against all who withheld their assent to the presumed late continuance of miracles;

nor did these fail to endeavour to fasten on their adversaries the distinction of infidelity. The attempt, however, was in the end unsuccessful; “for it was found to be possible that others, as well as our author, who had the truth, and credibility of the christian miracles much at heart, might be very little concerned about the miracles of the primitive church. No doctrine of Christ, no practice that he has required depends upon them: and therefore it is of no such great consequence, which way soever this point is determined.”

And yet, this was not so indifferent a matter, as it should seem, in the estimation of a late prelate, who, some few years afterwards, judged it necessary to fabricate a new test, upon this question of the continuation of miraculous powers in the christian church; and then to propose it to, and require the assent of a candidate for a dispensation, as the condition of his grace's *fiat*; though, either from the supposition that it was a matter of doubtful disputation, or from it's non importance, the authorities which direct in such cases had in no wise interfered. The archbishop's penetration led him

him to suspect some latent heretical pravity, and so slender was his stock of moderation and prudence, that in this, and in a similar case, relating to the doctrine of the *intermediate state*, he assumed to himself, a power unwarranted by the laws of his country. It is now only to be lamented that these transactions have not *hitherto* been *minutely* stated by the aggrieved parties; a desideratum to a complete biographical embellishment of Dr. Secker's temper and disposition, when seated in the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury. ^a

^a See *An historical view of the controversy concerning an intermediate state.* 2d. edition, 1772; pages 245, 246, note.

C H A P T E R VIII.

*His Paraphrase and Notes upon the epistle
to the Hebrews.* 1755.

THIS work of our author's is emphatically marked by the truly learned and liberal minded Dr. John Jebb ; " Sykes," says he, " is eminently useful on the Hebrews." ^a

Frederick Samuel Bock, a learned foreigner, seems to have committed an error in attempting to discriminate the opinion of our author upon the subject of the divine unity, in the work before us. In his *Historia antitrinitariorum ; sive, maxime socinianismi & socinianorum* ; published at Koenigsberg in Prussia, and Leipzig in Germany, in 1766. he writes, " Arturium Ashley Sykesium, Anglum, Schlichtingii vestigia in explicanda hac Pauli epistola prefisse constat." ^b And our own countryman,
Dr.

^a See his *Short account of theological lectures*. second edit. 1772. p. 17. note.

^b See tom. i. p. 781.

Dr. Harwood, appears to have fallen into a somewhat similar mistake, when he makes the general assertion “ that there is hardly a good criticism in all our modern expositors, Mr. Locke, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Benson, Dr. Taylor, Messrs. Peirce and Hallet, Dr. Sykes, but what is to be found in that collection published under the name of the *Unitarian brethren*, and commonly called the *Fratres poloni*.”^c Mr. Locke indeed is generally understood to have been a strict and proper unitarian, and as such might be considered in part as the disciple of Socinus, Schlichtingius, and others of the *Fratres poloni*; but it is very certain that the other great names are well known to have favoured the arian scheme. This is mentioned here, only with the view of correcting a mistake in the matter of fact.

The introduction to the paraphrase contains the several preparatory inquiries mentioned in the title page, and these are of great importance to the general knowledge of the epistle to the Hebrews.

1. With respect to the author of it, great disagreement in opinion has prevailed

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among

^c See his *Five dissertations*, 1772. p. 88.

among learned men. The occasion of this difference may be chiefly ascribed to the style and manner of writing, and no name being prefixed to this, as there is to all the rest of St. Paul's epistles. In consequence of this uncertainty, it has been severally ascribed to Barnabas, according to Tertullian; to St. Luke according to some; or to Clemens, who was afterwards bishop of Rome; while others, in later times, have conjectured it to have been written by Apollos.

The testimony of St. Jerom is produced, as far as it can be collected from his writings, in which it is hard to reconcile the good father to himself, when he speaks either of the author of this epistle, or the language in which it was written; nor is he more consistent or accurate when he speaks of the reception of this epistle in the churches of the east and the west. That it was received by the latin churches is shewn by the citations made from it by Clemens in his epistle, (written in the name of the church Rome) to the church of Corinth; so also from Novatian, grounded upon his severe notions against such as
had

had lapsed. Philastrius also, while he states the temporary withholding it from the people by the roman church, because of it's supposed countenance to Novatian's severities, admits that it was nevertheless at the same time received as canonical.

Some account is next given of those, who by some are reputed to have rejected this epistle as not being Paul's; and of these Caius is the first, a presbyter, and probably the only one in the church of Rome, that is mentioned as not allowing St. Paul to be the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. He lived at Rome about the year 210. The second is Hippolytus, who though he has been reckoned bishop of Porto in Italy, and so of the latin church, was more probably a bishop somewhere in Arabia than in Italy: he was a disciple of Irenæus, and flourished about the year 220; was a great friend of Origen's, and should much more properly be reckoned a member of the eastern, than of the latin church. Dr. Sykes next cites Tertullian, and Cyprian, and St. Austin, in the African church; but "among all these we meet with nobody," says he, "but
Tertullian

Tertullian who attributes this epistle to Barnabas ; or, says directly that it was not Paul's. There was some doubt, arising from the style ; and this was carried so far, as to lead Caius not to reckon it among the rest of St. Paul's. If from Africa we pass to the eastern, or greek churches, we find the same sort of doubting ; and founded on the same reason, viz. the difference of style betwixt this and the other epistles of St. Paul."

The several testimonies of Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and Alexander bishop of Alexandria, in the greek church, are next examined. Origen expressly declares that " as to himself, if he
 " might speak his mind, he would say, that
 " the sentiments are the apostle's, but the
 " diction or composition is of one who
 " remembering well what the apostle had
 " said, commented as it were upon his
 " master's sayings. If therefore any church
 " receives this epistle as Paul's, it may be
 " commended for it. For it was not upon
 " no grounds, that the ancients have
 " handed it down to us as Paul's. But as
 " to who wrote the epistle, God knows
 " the

“ the truth.” Clem. Alexandrinus “ names
 “ St. Paul expressly, as the author of the
 “ epistle to the Hebrews : only he thinks
 “ St. Paul wrote it in hebrew, and St. Luke
 “ translated it into greek, and that there is
 “ a similitude of style between the evangelist
 “ and the greek writer.” Eusebius “ allows
 “ fourteen epistles of St. Paul to be ge-
 “ nuine, known to all.” At the same time
 he tells us, that “ it was not right to con-
 “ ceal this, that some of the roman church
 “ rejected it as not being St. Paul’s, say-
 “ ing, that this was a matter of debate,
 “ or was contradicted.” And Alexander
 “ cites a couple of passages from the epistle
 to the Hebrews, saying, that Paul wrote so
 and so, attributing to St. Paul that epistle.”

“ But besides this evidence, one might,”
 says Dr. Sykes, “ easily add the internal cha-
 racters, taken from similitude of senti-
 ments, and even phrases and words, betwixt
 the writer of this epistle and St. Paul,
 which are certainly surprisngly remark-
 able. Many of these are observed in the
 notes following.” Moreover, “ whatever
 difficulty has ever been started about the
 author of this epistle, has been in order to
 account

account for the difference of style betwixt this, and the rest of St. Paul's epistles. It was this that led the writers of old to various conjectures about the author. The ancients, in Origen's time, attributed it to St. Paul: those that conjectured Clemens, or Barnabas, or Luke, to be the translators, have no evidence for any such translation: none of them ever pretend to have seen this epistle in hebrew; none of them produce any vouchers for such hebrew epistle: nay, all that have asserted such a fact, unanimously agree that St. Paul was the author of that hebrew epistle. They that rejected it as not St. Paul's, mean only the greek epistle; and intend no more than to say, that he did not write it in it's present dress: for they cite it wherever they have occasion, as St. Paul's. They that suppose the present greek to be a version from the hebrew, never object to it's being a true or just version; nor do I recollect but one single place, where the greek has been imagined to have varied from the hebrew; and even that, without any reason. From all which I infer, that St. Paul was the real author of this epistle,

and

and that there is no reason not to think him the real author of the greek epistle to the Hebrews." ^d

From a recapitulation of the evidence and argument, it appears that St. Paul was the true author of the present epistle, as it is in greek. "I would observe then," says the doctor, "that all those who speak as if this epistle was not St. Paul's, have done it only to account for the style and manner of writing, and not from any one single evidence, that it was not the genuine work of the apostle. That what is said

^d Dr. Lardner agrees with Dr. Sykes, (see his *History of the apostles and evangelists*. vol. ii. p. 328—331.) that this epistle was written by St. Paul in greek.—Mr. Peirce in his *Introduction* to his excellent *Paraphrase* of this epistle, inclines to think it was written in hebrew, or what is called (Acts i. 19.) the *proper tongue* of the Hebrews, which was, after the Babylonish captivity, a compound language of Caldee and Syriac: and that it was so written for the better understanding of the people. At the same time he does not suppose the present Syriac version need be considered as the original work of the apostle. The objections against the epistle being written in hebrew, are next considered; after which Mr. Peirce concludes that it was written in syriac, commonly called hebrew, and that it was probably translated into greek by St. Luke.

said of Caius does not appear to be, that he denied it to be St. Paul's, but is only a mere inference from his occasionally not reckoning up this epistle, with the rest of that apostle's writings. That this epistle was always received by the latin church, though sometimes upon particular occasions, it was not read in their churches. That though Jerom has spoke very inaccurately, and even inconsistently, about this epistle, yet he, as well as Origen, Eusebius, and others, have attributed it, in it's original, to St. Paul; and that all who have imagined it, in it's present dress, to belong to Clemens, or Luke, or Apollos, have only supposed this without evidence, or pretence of evidence; nor hath any one of them ever met with, or pretended to have met with, the original hebrew, in which they affirm it to have been wrote. These therefore are all mere hypotheses, to account for a style, or manner of writing, different from the rest of St. Paul's epistles; whereas, in truth, there is no occasion for any such suppositions. And if the *οι αρχαιοι*, the *ancients*, in Origen's times, declared the epistle to the Hebrews to be St. Paul's, not without good grounds, it is a sufficient reason to rest

on

on their authority, and to believe it to be his, without any fanciful scheme of his having wrote it in a language which no one pretends ever to have seen.” e

2. With

e The very learned Mr. Peirce in his *Introduction* to his *Paraphrase on the epistle to the Hebrews*, ascribes it to Paul ; and considers the objections against his being the writer as weak, and the counter testimony as strong. He separately examines the testimonies of Clement of Alexandria ; Origen ; (who however supposes only the *thoughts* to be Paul's, and that they were written down in better language than Paul's, by some other person ;) Alexander of Alexandria ; Eusebius of Cæsarea ; Athanasius of Alexandria ; the author of *Synopsis scripturæ* ; Cyril of Jerusalem ; Hilary of Poitiers in France ; Lucifer of Calaris in Sardinia ; Hilary deacon of the church of Rome ; Victorinus of the church of Rome ; Epiphanius bishop in Cyprus ; Ephraem of Syria ; Basil bishop of Cappadocia ; Gregory of Nyssa in Cappadocia ; Gregory of Nazianzum in Cappadocia ; Amphilochius of Lycaonia ; Didymus of Alexandria ; Macarius of Egypt ; Ambrose of Milan ; Jerom ; Philastrius of Italy ; Faustinus of Rome ; Theophilus of Alexandria ; Gaudentius of Italy ; Thecla of Seleucia ; Ruffinus of Italy ; Paulinus of Nola in Italy ; Augustin of Africa ; Chrysostom of Constantinople ; the council of Laodicea ; and the third council of Carthage ; and the eighty-fifth apostolical canon.

Other early writers who do not appear to ascribe this epistle to Paul, are Minutius Felix ; Cyprian ;
Novatian ;

2. With respect to the time when this epistle was written, Dr. Sykes fixes it in the year 67. Nero burnt Rome in 64, and thence took occasion to persecute the christians. Paul was not imprisoned 'till after this event, or he would then have suffered in the persecution. But rather seems to have gone from Rome into Spain, (Rom. xv. 24.) not improbably to avoid the persecution. In 65, he was at Jerusalem, and went to Colosse and Phillippi. In 66. he appears to have been at Corinth; from thence he went to Troas, and the parts adjacent, and did not come to Italy, most probably, before the year 67. And being then seized, (we know not on what occasion, except it be as a ringleader of the christians,) and put into prison, he there employed

Novatian; Arnobius; Lactantius; Julius Firmicus; and Optatus; but these do not attribute it to any other person. The evidence of St. Peter, is waved by Mr. Peirce; and the objections of Grotius and Le Clerc are answered. He also answers the objections, (chiefly from Clement of Alexandria, and Grotius,) drawn from the language and style of this epistle, as being different from those of St. Paul's undoubted epistles. See also Lardner's *History of the apostles and evangelists*. vol. ii. p. 331—386,

employed himself in writing to christians in other places ; and he desires them to *remember his bonds*, and to arm themselves against the fiery trial, and to withstand the temptation. In this year he and Timothy were *delivered out of the mouth of the lion* ; and afterwards he wrote to the Hebrews, and told them his design of coming to them. He therefore wrote this epistle not so early as the year 66, and most probably in the year 67. His return to Rome in 68, and his resolute continuance to preach *Jesus the Christ*, after his having been set at liberty, and pardoned the year before for this offence, seems to be the reason why he was condemned to death by that barbarous tyrant Nero.”^f

3. Under the third division of the Introduction, concerning the manner of citing the old Testament, Dr. Sykes argues against any supposed double or mystical senses in several parts thereof, when they are found

^f Mr. Peirce fixes the date of this epistle to the year 62, in the 9th of Nero. See his *Paraphrase*, p. 1. in the margin. Dr. Lardner says, the year 63, soon after Paul had been released from his confinement at Rome. *History of the apostles and evangelists*. vol. ii. p. 386.

found cited, or when similar expressions occur in the new Testament. And this is particularly instanced in the second psalm, in the expression, *thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*; which though understood of Christ, by some, may more properly have been spoken by David, concerning Solomon, or any one else. For the solution of this difficulty, recourse has been had by different persons, to different schemes of interpretation. Some of the jews conceived Paul to be particularly instructed in the mystical sense of the scriptures, and that he was master of the traditional interpretations of them. “From them, christians have learned to treat the scriptures in the same manner, and without resting in the literal, critical meaning of the words, they have indulged their fancies and imaginations so far, that the sense of scripture is no where less to be found, than in volumes of commentaries wrote on purpose to explain them.”

Now the manner of citing the old Testament, when the word, *fulfilled*, is used, has not always reference to a prophecy, much less to the constant and real accomplishment

plishment of one; but frequently means, that the words thentofore spoken, were juſtly applicable to the then preſent, as they were more immediately to the former generation to whom the prophet was ſent. Nor is this method of citation confined to chriſtian writers, but is ſhewn to be uſed by Epi-phanius, a greek father; and by Olym-piodorus, an heathen writer, in his life of Plato.

“ When therefore,” ſays our author, “ a citation is made from the ſacred writings, and even the word, *fulfilled*, is uſed, it does not follow that ſuch paſſage muſt be deemed a *prophecy*, unleſs it can be proved to be cited as a prophecy. So when a place is particularly applied to Chriſt, it is not neceſſary to underſtand it as a particular prophecy of Chriſt, unleſs it be attended with ſuch circumſtances as ſhew it to be prophetical of Chriſt.”

This diſtinction is obſerved and exemplified in an accurate examination of the ſecond and the one-hundred-and-tenth pſalms; the former, (wherein occurs, *thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee*,) cited Heb. i. 5. is ſhewn not to have any
 Y 2 prophetical

prophetical respect to Christ; and the latter, (in which occurs, *Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*;) though admitted to have real difficulties, was applied by our Saviour to *the Christ*, and St. Paul reasoned at large upon a verse of it, as such, in the first chapter, (ver. 13, 14.) of his epistle to the Hebrews.

In the 4th section is considered, the method of reasoning in this epistle, which was written to persons who had become christians already, and to such as had suffered persecution for Christ. “It was therefore wrote to hebrew christians, *i. e.* to such as from jews had become christians: and it was wrote, to keep them steady to their profession, or to guard them from relapsing into judaism. The arguments therefore all along urged, are such as prove christianity to be an institution in every respect superior to, and more excellent than the law of Moses; that there was no one thing in which a jew could boast, nor was there any one advantage in that law, but it was to be seen, or to be had, in a much better manner, under the law of Christ.”

“Now when the direct, plain, natural, design of an author appears in every step
as

as he proceeds, surely that should be deemed his purpose or design: and if by following that, the reasoning is strict and just, and the whole is rational and consistent, that which appears to be the tenor of the whole, should not be given up for the sake of some expressions which may incidentally occur."

"But as the design of this epistle has usually been thought to have been different from what is here said, it may be deemed an omission not to consider what others have suggested on this occasion. It has been said, *that the levitical priesthood was the shadow of the priesthood of Christ, in like manner as the tabernacle made by Moses, was according to that shewed him in the mount. The priesthood of Christ, and the tabernacle in the mount, were the originals: of the former of which the levitical priesthood was a type; and of the latter the tabernacle made by Moses was a copy. The doctrine then of this epistle plainly is, according to this account, that the legal sacrifices were allusions to the great and final atonement to be made by the blood of Christ; and not that this was an allusion to those.* It is usually

affirmed too, *that the legal sacrifices derived all their efficacy from Christ, that great sacrifice slain from the foundations of the world.*"

" But supposing that there are passages in this epistle which may countenance such notions, when taken by themselves, independent of the apostle's design, yet, if we take the general reasoning as our guide, viz. that there is no advantage in the law, nor any thing to be particularly boasted of in it, which is not much superior and more excellent in the gospel—the consequence is, not that the legal sacrifices were *allusions to the great and final atonement made by the blood of Christ*, but that the apostle only compares the one with the other, and shews which has the advantage over the other, without concerning himself about which was the original, and which the copy. St. Paul never says that the levitical priesthood was a type of the priesthood of Christ, nor that the priesthood of Christ was the original; nor was such a notion to his purpose; for his argument is strict and just, whatever becomes of such a notion."

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“ The apostle says indeed, that *the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereto perfect.* (chap. x. 1.) They could certainly do what they were designed to do : *i. e.* they could remove what would obstruct the temporal happiness of the jews in Canaan : but the happiness promised in the law, was merely temporal ; and therefore, if compared with the eternal inheritance promised by Christ, it is no more than a mere shadow, an errant trifle : it is no more than a shadow compared to a solid substance. There is indeed some resemblance ; but it is so faint, so small, so trifling a one, that it can't be considered as the very image, or even just portraiture.”

In the conclusion of this Introduction, Dr. Sykes proceeds, fifthly, to vindicate St. Paul from “ a Remark or two made by lord Bolingbroke, which might seem to affect the credit and character of the apostle in all his writings ; for that he had in more places than one, treated Moses, and St. Paul, as errant impostors : he had de-

clared the God of Moses and the God of Paul, to be no God, or a local tutelary God of particular persons, or of a particular country : and has made no scruple to assert, that St. Paul *undertook, like a true cabalistical architect, with the help of type and figure, to raise a new system of religion, on the old foundation of the law.*"

" But this author" says he, " has told us several things relative to old books, and old facts, which no man but himself ever said, or thought of ; and which every man conversant in books, knows to be false. He has asserted some things concerning St. Paul, without any grounds, false in fact, unworthy of any man, but such a one, as has attempted to destroy the credit, and credibility, of all divine revelation."

Dr. Sykes then goes on to observe upon the foundation for the expectation of the Messiah in Moses, and the prophets ; and upon lord Bolingbroke's representation of St. Paul's doctrine of grace, predestination, &c. considering his lordship's labours as the effusions of a willing adversary to the gospel, who, purposely mistaking the use of type and figure, and overlooking the rational
account

account given by Mr. Locke, of St. Paul's doctrine of predestination and election, has grossly, if not wilfully misrepresented the apostle.

Of *The paraphrase and notes upon the epistle to the Hebrews*, it is far beyond the compass of my design to enter into any minute enlargement. There is certainly great liberality of sentiment, and much rational interpretation of this epistle; supported by sound learning, and good and useful criticism. Nevertheless, I apprehend others have been more successful upon particular places, than our learned, diligent, and liberal paraphrast. The ascriptions of dignity to the person of Christ, Dr. Sykes is careful to distinguish, and to rectify the misapprehension of those phrases and expressions which have led some to think that the writer of the epistle conceived of the omnipotent Father and Creator of all, and of the created being Jesus Christ, as of one and the same person, substance, and essence: whereas he considers the word Hypostasis, (in the phrase *the express image of his person*,) as signifying “essence with it's properties, really subsisting; and thus, the son is properly the image, or just repre-

representation of God's properties." § Nevertheless, he admits the pre-existent state of Christ, and of his being the instrumental maker of the worlds, or ages : his interpretations therefore are consequently exposed to all the inextricable difficulties of the *arian* hypothesis ; so very inapplicable is the remark of the learned foreigner before-mentioned, who either judging hastily, or receiving his account through partial or suspicious channels of information, has considered our author as a favourer of socinianism.

Concerning Dr. Sykes's interpretation of, and criticisms on certain passages in this epistle which respect the person, dignity, and power of our Lord, there are not a few persons who conceive him to have misapprehended the meaning of the apostle ; and to have given into the ascription of properties and powers to Jesus Christ which belong only to the one living and true God. It is therefore ardently to be wished, that the candid and inquisitive reader who may be as earnestly engaged in and desirous to find out the truth, as our author himself, would

§ See note on ch. i. v. 3. p. 7.

would pursue the inquiry with his temper and zeal ; and do so much justice to himself as to consult some other writers, who have remarked upon some of these passages, with apparently greater success. ^h

In the course of the notes, when the apostle observes that our Lord *by himself purged our sins* ; (i. 3.) that *he offered one sacrifice for sins* ; (x. 12.) and that *their sins and iniquities he would remember no more* ; and *where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin*. (x. 17, 18.) These, and all such similar expressions, are rationally explained, and cleared of all those imputations on the moral attributes of the deity, which are involved in the misconceptions of the design and effects of

^h Upon the following passages in the epistle to the Hebrews, it is recommended to the reader to consult what has been lately written by Mr. Lindsey. Heb. I. v. 6. see his *Sequel*, pages 93—96. and his *Historical view*, p. 384—386.—I. v. 8, 9. *Seq.* p. 207.—II. v. 12. *Seq.* p. 33.—II. v. 14. *Hist. view*, p. 350. note o. ---IV. v. 14, 15. *Apology*, pages 126, 127.—V. v. 7, 8, 9. *Apol.* pages 126, 127. and *Seq.* 54.—VII. v. 24—28. *Apol.* pages 126, 127. and *Seq.* p. 87—92.—VIII. v. 1—4. and IX. v. 11, 12. *Apol.* pages 126, 127.—XI. v. 26. *Seq.* 278—280.—XIII. v. 8. *Seq.* pages 280, 281.—XIII. v. 15. *Seq.* p. 31.

of the death of Christ, usually maintained in the vulgar doctrine of atonement and satisfaction. ⁱ

There is one thing not to be accounted for, and which was remarked to me, by a very learned friend, before I had, on the present occasion, looked into the paraphrase on the Hebrews. Dr. Sykes has not once cited, or taken any notice of the labours of his learned predecessors, Mr. Peirce, or Mr. Hallett junior, upon the same epistle, who had preceded him very little more than twenty years; and whose works were, and will, very deservedly continue to be held in high esteem with the learned of all denominations.

Dr. Sykes's work was soon after attacked by an anonymous writer, in a *Critical examination of the notes of Dr. Sykes upon the epistle to the Hebrews*. By Alethophilus. But the criticisms and reasoning were the overflowings of a zeal without knowledge, and without temper; and as such would not now be known to have existed,

ⁱ Besides the places where these expressions occur in the text, see *Appendix*, No. II. at the end of the *Paraphrase*.

existed, but from the periodical journals of the time; in one of which, the writer received the just animadversion he deserved, by the simple exhibition of ample extracts from his tract.^k

Mr. Peirce appears to have been much inclined to the calvinistic notions of atonement and satisfaction; and the words of the apostle, in certain parts of the epistle, are by some considered as looking that way: whereas Dr. Sykes has uniformly given them that rational construction which appears to be most consonant to the general design of the writer, and to right ideas of the divine justice, and the nature of man, considered as an accountable agent.

Mr. Peirce, Mr. Hallet, and Dr. Sykes, seem to hold one and the same interpretation of such passages as have any constructive reference to the supposed divinity and pre-existence of Christ; and, if I may be excused, I should say that this is the great mistake in their several books, and an hindrance to the advancement of the truth, as it is in the gospel of Jesus. However

^k See *Monthly review*, vol. xiv. p. 525.

However distant the time may be, it will be an eminent advantage to the better understanding of the christian scriptures, and to the preaching of the gospel to jews and unbelievers, when we shall see a careful collation of original manuscripts, made the basis of an accurate translation of the sacred text of both Testaments, promoted by those who bear rule. And still further, when all our present learned illustrations of the sacred writings shall, in a great degree, be superseded by the proper advantages to be derived from such diligence and fidelity. Then may the disciples of our common master become one fold, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ their head; and the absolute unity of the peerless majesty of God be maintained by the whole community of christians. This expectation is anticipated, not because it is agreeable to the system of any individual, sect, or party, but in the full persuasion that it has been demonstrated to be the doctrine of Christ himself, his apostles, and evangelists, as also of Moses and the prophets. Nor is it less the language of the religion of nature than of revelation. It is one of those truths,

truths, against which, the testimony of an angel from heaven cannot be received. And it is nothing but a fondness for established formularies, a fear of forsaking the trammels and prejudices of education, and an apprehension of imaginary consequences, that men are backward to declare, that God is essentially and numerically one, without equal, and that he only is to be worshipped: and that Jesus Christ, is no other than a man, eminently distinguished, and divinely commissioned by almighty God as his messenger, to preach and declare his will concerning his creatures.

C H A P T E R IX.

His Scripture doctrine of the redemption of man, by Jesus Christ. 1756.

IT is the design of our author, in this work, to represent the christian dispensation as perfectly agreeable to natural religion, and the dictates of reason; and to examine such parts of the christian scriptures as concern his purpose, not singly and detached, but as connected with their context. “For where any one,” as he observes in his preface, “forms a system, from one, or from a few passages only of scripture, without taking in the whole of what is said, there will naturally, and almost necessarily arise the wildest notions. The many sects, the schisms, the heresies, that have too much abounded in the christian world, have all arisen from this source. Their authors have taken some few passages of holy writ, which seem to make for their purposes, without considering

sidering their context, or the design of the writer in the particular places where they occur, or perhaps not the very grammatical construction of words ; and thence they have inferred whatever their favourite scheme has led them to."

The method here pursued by Dr. Sykes, is certainly very favourable to the discovery of the true meaning of the scriptures. Nevertheless, even in this way, the most learned and impartial person may mistake his road ; and it is presumed, that Dr. Sykes has not, in all parts of his book, been equally successful. His own best judgment led him to understand and interpret the scripture account of Jesus Christ, as has been before observed, according to what is generally denominated the *arian* scheme ; but which is attended with so many difficulties in the establishment of it, and involves so many more in it's consequences, that I do not hesitate to say, that this appears to me, the prevailing, if not the only general mistake, in his otherwise very valuable work. Herein however, I speak only the opinion of an individual, and leave to others

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the same right and liberty of following their own judgment, which I exercise myself.

The compass and extent of the subject of the volume before us, will admit only of a statement of it's design, in the titles of the several chapters which compose the first part; and a general reference to his forty-eight propositions, which make up the second, and are considered by the author as the deductions from his criticism and reasoning, and as proved in the former part of the book.

The several chapters into which the *first part* of this work is divided, contain all the principal texts of the new Testament, (i.) wherein mention is made of the goodness, mercy, and kindness of God; (ii.) of the disposition of God towards man, antecedent to the death of Christ; (iii.) and of God's manifestation of his love to man through Christ; (iv.) which relate to the state of man antecedent to our Saviour's coming into the world; (v.) or mention what Christ did, or suffered for us, and the effects of what he did or suffered, (vi.) which mention either the death of Christ; or why he died at all; and what was the end of his dying,

dying ; (vii.) and lastly, our author gives a short view of the several passages of scripture which have a more immediate relation to the doctrine of *redemption*, and considers what our Saviour is said to do, or to suffer for us ; and what were the effects of either his action or passion, as they are expressed in the scripture.

The interpretation of, and criticism upon a very great number of passages in the preceding chapters, and in the moral observations upon each of them, are judicious and deserving of the particular attention of those who want or wish for information concerning the scripture doctrine of redemption and atonement, than which nothing has been more mistaken, perverted, and abused.

The *second part*, contains a somewhat different arrangement of a great many texts which are classed under certain determinate propositions, before spoken of, in order to shew, at one view, the scheme of the christian dispensation.

A writer, who has himself considerably promoted scriptural knowledge, has observed upon the general tendency and usefulness of Dr. Sykes's writings in explaining

the scriptures and particularly noticed the volume now before us.^a And it has been said by one of the first literary characters of the present age, who is himself no less candid, amiable, and ingenuous, than learned, that in Dr. Sykes's treatise on redemption, "there is a great number of texts admirably explained."^b

^a "Dr. Sykes's *Scripture doctrine of redemption*, is another good book, containing an elaborate discussion of the subject, in the execution of which he displays that distinguished knowledge of the scriptures, for which this great man was, and ever will be deservedly celebrated. All Dr. Sykes's works manifest his sedulous and successful study of the scriptures, and from this circumstance is derived their capital merit. Particularly, his *Truth of the christian religion*, his *Connection of natural and revealed religion*, his *Essay on sacrifices*. His two pamphlets on the *Dæmoniacs* are very valuable in this respect, and will impart great pleasure and improvement to him who carefully peruses them."—See some observations at the end of Dr. Harwood's edition of the greek Testament, in two vols. 1776.—vol. ii. p. 286.

^b Dr. Priestley. See *The theological repository*, vol. i. p. 45.—A work which has been lately revived, and is, in every view, admirably calculated to promote inquiry, and serve the cause of truth.

CHAPTER X.

His tract on confirmation, and a posthumous publication, entitled, An inquiry when the resurrection of the body or flesh, was first inserted into the public creeds.

1756—1757.

THERE is a small tract, bearing the same date with the volume which was the subject of the last chapter; and which tract is, upon very good authority, ascribed to Dr. Sykes. The title at length is, (LXII.) *A minister's instructions to such as offer themselves to be prepared for confirmation. In two parts. The one before, the other after, the examination of the persons offering themselves for that purpose.* (1756.) The minister, who is the appointed examiner, confines the instructions before confirmation, to the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments; and to the nature and end of the two sacraments, as set forth in the

church catechism. He considers them very briefly, without entering into any disquisition which leads beyond the first principles of our religion; or attempting to comment upon, or explain certain interpolations which are to be found in the creed referred to, or the harsh and exceptionable expressions in respect to the sacraments, in the church catechism: nor does he make any remark upon the general misuse, if not profanation, of the institution of baptism, in the nominal engagements of sponsors.

But, as in the first part, our author emphatically observes, that “we are not to have any other objects of worship but one;” so, in the second, he wisely directs young christians to “a constant and careful perusal of the new Testament. In *that*, he says, they will have the religion of Christ pure and uncorrupted; there they will meet with none of those errors, which the weakness, or the wickedness of men has introduced; and there they will see a pure simplicity, a perfect consistency, a doctrine worthy of God to give, and worthy of man to receive. That contains a perfect
rule

rule of faith ; and that calls us back by repentance to the perfect rule of action." And he strictly cautions his catecumens, " never, under any pretence whatever, to give up their common sense and understanding. For assuredly, whenever any one pretends to teach a doctrine as a doctrine of the gospel, which is contrary to natural sense, there is some latent fraud, some deceit, which, though a man of less judgment or penetration, may not be able to discover or perceive, yet one of more abilities will easily see through, and will be able to manifest it's absurdity. But this, says he, I do but just hint at here ; warning you beforehand of such wickedness in the world, and cautioning you how to act, when accidentally you may meet with such instruments of Satan, attempting to make converts to absurdities." This necessary advice against the little arts of the advocates of system, is followed by some benevolent cautions against all seductions to sin and folly. Nevertheless, as confirmation is an institution or rite in the established church, subject to so much abuse from the misapprehension of it's de-

sign, and more particularly of it's supposed effect; and as involving in it the formal release of sponsors from engagements, which the much greater number do not consider themselves under any obligation to perform; and in the discharge of which, they are in many cases prohibited, even towards orphans, by the special direction of the parent: these things should seem to deserve the attention of expositors and instructors.^a

The next, and last work of our author's, was posthumous, in respect to it's publication, though it was prepared for, if not gone to the press before his death. His brother, Mr. George Sykes, appears as the editor; but very little trouble, it is apprehended, devolved upon him. I have been

^a There is a valuable little tract on this subject, written with much liberality, though it does not pursue these objections to their extent, written by the learned and ingenious Dr. Adams, master of Pembroke college, Oxford, entitled, *Pastoral advice to young persons before confirmation*; first printed 1772; since republished several times; and is also included in a volume of *Sermons and tracts upon religious subjects*, by the same author. 8vo. 1777.

been assured, that this tract was composed chiefly from the papers of Sir Isaac Newton; and it is very possible, from certain other circumstances, that such information may be true; the editor however has given no information of this kind, and I cannot but think there is much internal evidence of this tract having been chiefly, if not wholly written by Dr. Sykes. But this supposition of my own, is made with deference to the account which ascribes some of the materials to Sir Isaac Newton, and may indeed, in part, be very consistent with the truth of it.

The title of this posthumous piece, is, (LXIII.) *An inquiry when the resurrection of the body, or flesh, was first inserted into the public creeds.* (1757.) It was no part of our author's design to enter into the *history of the creed*; but, as he states in his preface, "all that he intended was, to shew how insensibly doctrines are changed; that, in a plain instance, a variation from the *words* of scripture is, and has been the means of introducing a different doctrine from what is contained in them: that what is pretended to be an explanation of scripture, is often more hard to be understood

stood than the scriptures themselves are: that the additions and interpretations of men, often quite change the truths of the gospel: that when in process of time, one false notion is taught or established, *that* is made the foundation of another, and thus at length *transubstantiation* itself has been made the doctrine of Christ." And then he adds, "I do not say, nor would I be understood to insinuate, that all and every change of doctrine is attended with consequences so gross, or so destructive of common sense as *transubstantiation* is, or even as some καθωμιλημεναι διδασχαι, *commonly taught doctrines*, are: but my view is, to shew how the gospel has been changed, and made liable to objections, which in itself it is not liable to. And if any objection is an obstruction to the reception of christianity by any person whatever, it may merit consideration, where the fault lies,—Whether in those who do not believe christianity, because it seems to them (as it is represented) to contain doctrines incredible, or in those who *teach for doctrines the commandments of men*."

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While we admire the simple *credenda*, or things necessary to be believed, according to the gospel of Christ, we cannot but proportionably lament the superaddition made to them in subsequent ages by the devices of men ; and in times too, the least competent of all others to arrogate the imposition of human explications of the word of God. The revival of literature, and the consequent enlargement of the human mind, have very explicitly declared against the truth, as well as the right and expediency of these supplemental appendages ; but the virtue and spirit of christians have not been equal to the full improvement of that light which has been let in upon them, and which can only be satisfied by the utter rejection of what does not legitimately belong to the holy scriptures.

It is first observed by Dr. Sykes, in respect to the present inquiry, that there is no such expression as the *resurrection of the body* or *flesh*, in the new Testament ; and then he goes on to examine all the passages which have been supposed to countenance such a notion. But he has
further

further made it appear, that the controversy about this doctrine did not begin 'till the middle, or near the end of the second century, and that the insertion of it into any creed, was reserved to a much later period. In the creed fabricated in 325, at the famous council of Nice, there is not one word as to the resurrection of the flesh; though very soon after indeed, it appeared in the joint, but private creed of Arius and Euzoius, presented by them to the emperor Constantine, in a personal interview with him, in or about the year 327; and was afterwards approved by a synod at Jerusalem, held in 335, or 336. The next time we have any hint of this doctrine, as an article proper for a creed, is in 341, at the council of Antioch; and then it was mentioned in a very extraordinary manner, "If any thing ought to be added, we believe the *resurrection of the flesh*." It was inserted in the creed of Cyril of Jerusalem, in the year 347: but it did not prevail in the eastern church, for thirty-four years afterwards. For when the council of Constantinople was held in 381, they established only the *resurrection of the dead*, though

though they took into their creed three other articles which Cyril had expounded. And thus it has continued ever since in the east.

In the western church, the admission of this article into the creed, was probably in the time of Ruffinus, who flourished after the council of Constantinople, probably about 390, or later.

The closing observations in this learned tract, as they are of very general and wide extent, and are important in every view of them, deserve to be cited at length. And as they very aptly constitute the last argument advanced by our author in defence of the genuine simplicity of the gospel of Christ, they may no less suitably conclude this review of his writings :
 “ From the account before given,” says he,
 “ of the rise and growth of this notion of the *resurrection of the flesh*, it seems to follow clearly, that in all points which depend upon revelation, men should confine themselves rigidly to the scripture language, and not be wise above what is written. When men recede from that, and add human doctrines to divine ones, they
 always

always involve themselves in difficulties insurmountable. If the curiosity of idle or vain people, had not led them to a particular explication of the general article of the resurrection of the dead, how many disputes had been avoided? If one looks into the history of this doctrine, one cannot but see, that though our baptismal creed is now determinate, for a belief of the *resurrection of the body or flesh*, yet three hundred and fifty years passed before there was any such notion required to be professed in the christian church: and so long as all are taught to believe, that *all are to be judged, quick and dead; that all are to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and that he will come again, and render to every one according to his works*, is it not raising an idle question to ask, *With what bodies shall we come?* And if any one answers such a question by saying,—*in THIS flesh*—does he not assert *more* than revelation has taught him, though it is what nothing but revelation can assure him of? And should the consequence be, what actually has been, that unbelievers raise an objection from hence against christianity itself, *be-*
lievers

lievers are answerable for it, *as teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

“ The growth of infidelity has long been the subject of great complaint amongst serious well meaning people: may it not be worth considering, whether the true cause of infidelity does not lie amongst those who profess a faith which they call christian, and which is found inconsistent with reason, and even common sense? Every one that examines at all, will see additions made to the great articles of christianity. How many additions were made to what the gospel of Christ has said, concerning the son and the holy ghost, in the several creeds framed in the fourth century? This possibly was then done with a good design to fence in, and to secure a right faith: but whatever was the design, it has been attended with consequences fatal to christianity itself. The *fences* have been considered as the *thing fenced in*; and when men have seen things that they cannot comprehend or understand, taught as fundamentals of *christianity*, it is natural to reject what is unintelligible, as impossible to be required by God: and thus

thus must infidelity prevail. Whereas, if one takes the religion of Christ as it lies in the word of God, it is *pure, peaceable*, no way contrary to reason, *intelligible* by every body, so far as every body is concerned. The evidence for it's truth is clear and plain, and easy. *The poor had the gospel preached unto them* at first, as well as the rich; and the poor are to be saved as well as the rich, and therefore the one can *understand* what is required of him by Christ as well as the other. But then if men will presume to take the word of God into their hands, and will new mould and frame it as they think fit; and will make what is easy to be hard and unintelligible, and then will anathematise and persecute men for refusing to profess what they do not understand, there will always be infidelity covered under the mask of christianity; and christianity, or what is called so, will be slyly and openly attacked; and 'till it is professed pure and uncorrupted, it must have it's enemies; and if *offences* arise, *woe unto him by whom the offence cometh.*"

CHAPTER XI.

His DEATH *and* CHARACTER.

THE consideration of the last publication, which bore the name of Dr. Sykes, was somewhat anticipated, that the review of his writings might close the last chapter, though it was preceded by the death of it's author.

Dr. Sykes had been many years greatly afflicted with the gout and stone, but had received much relief from the pains of the latter disorder, for fifteen or sixteen years before his death, by the medicine purchased by parliament of Mrs. Stephens, for the public use. ^a And upon the whole he enjoyed a general state of good health and spirits, until he was seized with a stroke of the palsy, while attending the funeral of a friend, on Monday evening, November the 15th, 1756. The change in

A a his

^a Dr. Birch's M.S. account.

his countenance, and the faltering in his speech, being instantly perceived by the rest of the company, who attended on the same occasion, he was prevailed upon to return to his own house, in Cavendish-square, without waiting the interment of the corpse. He survived this presage of his own dissolution little more than a week; and died at two o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday the 23d of the same month, in the seventy-third year of his age. He was buried, near the pulpit in the parish church of St. James's Westminster, on the 30th of November; when Dr. Gregory Sharpe, who succeeded him in King-street chapel, and was afterwards master of the Temple, and who had long been in habits of friendship with the deceased, officiated upon the occasion.^b

Dr. Sykes had been married many years, to Mrs. Elizabeth Williams, a widow lady, and a native of Bristol, but had no children by her. He left the whole of his fortune, which was considerable, to her

^b From the information of the reverend Mr. Robertson; and from Mr. Jeacocke, who was present at the time of Dr. Sykes's seizure; and from the parish register.

her for life ; and afterwards to his brother, the reverend George Sykes ; ^c who gave the bulk of it to the family of their patron, Robert Bristow, esq. whose grandson, a minor, is now the owner of it. ^d

Mrs. Sykes survived her husband upwards of six years, and died in January 1763, and was buried near him, on the 31st of that month. ^e

In private life, Dr. Sykes was of easy, gentle, and obliging manners, naturally cheerful and good tempered, modest and unassuming, unfouled by controversy, not

A a 2 proud

^c The reverend George Sykes, M A. was collated by the archbishop of Canterbury, to the vicarage of Preston, in the hundred of Feversham, in Kent, October 15, 1715. He was also instituted to the rectory of Hawkeswell, in Essex, December 15, 1716, on the presentation of Robert Bristow, esq. And on the death of his brother, he was instituted to the rectory of Rayleigh, in the same county, May 4, 1757, on the presentation of Mr. Bristow ; resigning Hawkeswell, and taking a dispensation to hold Rayleigh in Essex, with Preston in Kent. He died June 9, 1766. (See Haisted's history of Kent, vol. ii. pages 813, 814 ; and Morant's history of Essex, vol. i. pages 278, 290.)

^d From private letters.

^e From the parish register.

proud of, or confident in his learning. He was strictly just in all his concerns with others, faithful in his engagements, humane to the poor; singularly exact in all his appointments, and punctual in his payments.

His manner and delivery in the pulpit, were very generally approved, and admired. His sermons were rather plain than elegant; but they were always clear and intelligible, though sometimes argumentative. He was always careful in the choice of his substitute, when he was necessarily absent from town, where he chiefly resided, except during some part of every summer, which he constantly spent at Rayleigh, and his occasional residence at Winchester and Salisbury. And he never wanted the ready assistance of some of the highest order of the clergy. A person now living, who himself regularly attended public worship in King-street chapel, remembers to have heard three bishops preach for him, on three successive Sundays.

It is very observable, that Dr. Sykes applied himself early in life, to the study of the scriptures; and he pursued it with
equal

equal application and success, to a good old age. He was also well versed in the writings of the fathers, and the early philosophers; and added to these acquirements, he was happy in a quick discernment, and a solid judgment. In all his various political debates, and literary controversies, he always conducted himself with temper and good manners towards his adversaries; insomuch, that it will be difficult to find one single instance, wherein he exceeded the bounds of decorum and civility. Few men have laboured more unweariedly to serve the best interests of christianity and protestantism; for while he defended the truth and evidences of our common faith, he displayed the same zeal for the sacred right of private judgment, without which the revealed will of God would cease either to lead us into a reasonable faith, or influence a rational conduct. He was warmly attached to the civil liberties of his country, to the principles of the revolution, and the protestant succession.

In his person, our author is said to have been rather low of stature, and

something inclined to corpulency; to have been slightly marked with the small-pox, and of a fresh complexion. His countenance is also said to have been a faithful mirror of his mind, pleasant and good tempered. There is a portrait of him, taken when he was between forty and fifty years of age, painted by Wills. It was given by Mrs. Sykes, his widow, to Robert Bristow, esq. and I am informed, it is now in that family.

What has already been said, in the preceding pages, should seem to preclude any particular display of our author's abilities as a scholar, and a divine; his works will speak his just praise. His honest love and ardent zeal for truth are apparent, and have already been occasionally noticed, and appear the leading features of his character. "Whatever my abilities are," says he to Mr. Whiston, "which I freely acknowledge to be not great, yet be they more or less, truth I love, and truth I constantly search after, and make truth the study of my life; and I hope nothing will ever have influence enough to make me swerve from that."

that.”^f And elsewhere he writes,—
 “How well I have succeeded in my design, the reader is now to judge. Perhaps it may be thought that I have mistaken the meaning of *some* passages of scripture. All that I can say for myself is this only; that in the explication of so many, it is well if I have not. However, I have sincerely endeavoured to follow truth, being very little solicitous where it led me: and if I have failed, yet, this I am sure of, that my intentions were good and upright.”^g And Dr. Gregory Sharpe, in his *Review of the controversy about the meaning of the demoniacs*, bears his testimony to the amiable and ingenuous disposition of his friend; “If I may guess,” says he, “at the inquirer’s temper, I believe he had, at any time, rather embrace the truth, let who will teach it, than continue in an error with the multitude.”^h

A a 4

In

^f See his *Defence of dissertation on Phlegon*. p. 72.

^g Preface to *Essay on truth of the christian religion*. p. v.

^h See *Review*, &c. p. 64.

In confirmation of this excellent part of our author's character, I am happy to be able to produce the evidence of the eminently learned and liberal minded Dr. Jortin, from the information of a most respectable clergyman in the established church, whose situation in this great city, derives peculiar honour and credit to his noble patrons. In a mixed company, where Dr. Jortin was present, and at a time when certain of Dr. Sykes's publications were the subject of conversation, it was observed by some gentleman, (who probably inherited his own principles and opinions in the same quiet undisturbed way, that he had succeeded to the paternal inheritance of his family,) that in whatever debate Dr. Sykes was engaged he was sure to be on the wrong side. To this Dr. Jortin replied, that "without entering into the particular question then before the company, this he was well assured of, that Dr. Sykes was deserving of much praise; for even *if* he was so frequently in the wrong, as the gentleman had observed, it must be remembered, that no man took more pains to be in the right."—And this good opinion

opinion of Dr. Jortin, seems to have been reciprocal on the part of Dr. Sykes, who in his letter to Dr. Birch, in July 1753, writes;—"As to my friend Mr. Jortin, " he is already so far in the mire, that " he cannot retire backwards, consequently " he must go on: I heartily wish him all " success, and hope he will at length receive, what he ought to have had many " years ago, an encouragement suitable to " his learning, and real merits." ⁱ

Dr. Sykes's sentiments respecting the person of Jesus Christ are well known to have agreed with those of Dr. Clarke; and one of his tracts was expressly written in defence of his *Scripture doctrine of the trinity*. In the use of this word (trinity,) I cannot but think that these learned men misrepresented themselves; and while they rejected the doctrine which is generally understood by the word "trinity," they would have done well to have waved the frequent and indiscriminate use of the term. Dr. Sykes, in one place, speaks of "the ever blessed trinity;" ^k and in another, he says, "the doctrine

ⁱ M.S. Letter in Brit. Museum.

^k See his *External peace of the church*. p. 17.

doctrine of the trinity, when considered as it lies in the new Testament, is not any absolute mysterious notion, but only a doctrine holding forth that which the baptismal creed likewise contains.”^l And again, “the scripture doctrine of the trinity stands unshaken.”^m The learned Mr. Jackson of Rossington, also speaks of being “brought “he trusts into the true knowledge of Jesus “Christ his God and saviour,” and again, thanks Dr. Clarke “for his very learned “and judicious book of the scripture doctrine of the trinity,” to which he adds, “by God’s grace, he owed the then present “settlement of his mind in the true faith of “the ever blessed trinity.”ⁿ

And even so lately as the last year, 1784, the learned Mr. Taylor, author of the *Apolo-
gy of Benjamin Ben Mordecai*, though he reprobates the phrase (trinity,) citing at the same time, the disapprobation of Luther

^l *Connexion*, p. 248.

^m *Ibid.* p. 272.

ⁿ See Preface, and first of three letters in defence of Dr. Clarke, 1714, and cited in “*Memoirs of Mr. Jackson’s life.*” 8vo. pages 9, 10.

ther and Calvin to the very name, ° continues the use of it, under the general idea, that “ so long as that word is understood in “ a sense agreeable to the unity of Jeho- “ vah, and the fundamental principles of “ christianity, it can furnish no argument “ against the truth of that religion.” All this is very plausible, and the practice would be more excusable, if every man, or every reader reasoned accurately, and considered things abstractedly; but since this is not the case, the use of the word “ trinity,” by those who are well understood not to believe the full import of it, in it’s common signification, is using equivocal language, and such as will mislead many readers. It certainly tends more to edification, to use plain and determinate words; and

° See the *Apology* of Benjamin Ben Mordecai, second edition, vol. i. pages 140, 141. Martin Luther says, “ The word *trinity* sounds oddly, and is a human invention; it were better to call almighty God, *God* “ than *trinity*.” And John Calvin says, “ I like not “ this prayer, O holy, blessed, and glorious *trinity*; “ it favours of barbarity. The word *trinity* is barbarous, insipid, profane; a human invention, grounded “ on no testimony of God’s word; the popish god, “ unknown to the prophets and apostles.”

and to speak to the understandings of men in language that shall help, and not confound, or mislead their apprehensions.

It is most probable that Dr. Sykes left several manuscripts behind him; but I have been particularly informed, by a learned gentleman in the neighbourhood of Winchester, of some valuable papers “upon the authority of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, by way of dialogue, after the manner of Cicero; very well done, and fairly written ready for the press; very candid and equal to any thing he has written.” Dr. Sykes has also been said to have left some manuscript remarks on Mr. Peirce’s ordination sermon. His own sermons are very credibly reported to have been sold.

Dr. Sykes’s engagement in the several successive controversies of his time, has attracted the notice of some observers, and who, on that account, have affected to underrate his eminent worth, and no less eminent learning, and the value of his writings. But these persons should consider, that in the accommodation and application of his learning and abilities to the different demands
and

and exigencies of the times, he rendered a very essential and permanent service to the cause of truth and liberty. For, notwithstanding the disrespect which is occasionally shewn towards religious controversy, by little and illiberal minds, it is to such controversies as engaged the pens of Clarke, Hoadly, and Sykes, that we owe much of what is most valuable and dear to us. An affected disparagement of the several controversies which have respected religious liberty, and the improved knowledge of the scriptures, generally indicates an indifference to the nature and obligations of religion itself; or bespeaks a total ignorance of the blessings we derive and enjoy from free inquiry and debate, by means of the press; or is the effect of a lamentable prejudice against every desire and attempt to bring all professing christians to abide by the plain and artless gospel of Christ. Or, when such aversion to controversy is held by well meaning and more candid minds, it is no other than their declaring their earnest desire to establish the *end*, while at the same time they inconsistently and peremptorily

remptorily protest against the only *means* which can effect it. ^p

The late Mr. Hollis, who was himself an active and greatly distinguished friend of liberty, bore his testimony to Dr. Sykes's writings, by repeatedly advertising in the year 1766, his two tracts against popery, originally published in the year 1746, and reprinted 1763. And further, by collecting, as

^p There is a prefatory discourse on the use and importance of theological controversy, prefixed to *An historical view of the controversy concerning an intermediate state*. 1772. 2d. edit. 8vo. which is well worth the attentive perusal of every protestant. Bishop Hoadly's sentiments upon this subject, are judiciously expressed, and deserve to be recited. "If any think such controversies," says he, "especially amongst the clergy, of scandalous or pernicious consequence; I answer, that it is not the difference, but the manner of handling, and debating it, that is the scandal; that I see no way left but that, either all must agree in judgment; or all must equally consent to be silent; or, one side only must speak; or, there must be debates, and controversies. But, in my opinion, if we behave ourselves, as becomes christians, in the management of them; this is our only concern, in such cases: nay, I have often thought that this would make even controversy itself a glory to christianity." See the Preface to his *Original and institution of civil government*. vol. ii. of his works, p. 188.

as he states in his diary, “ a complete set
 “ of the late learned excellent Dr. Sykes’s
 “ works, to bind and send to Harvard col-
 “ lege, in America, for honourable pre-
 “ servation of his memory.” “ A collec-
 “ tion,” add the editors of the Memoirs,
 “ the more necessary, as well as the more
 “ valuable, as some of the doctor’s tracts
 “ were become exceeding scarce.”^q This
 testimony of Mr. Hollis, and of his bio-
 graphers, will bring more reputation to
 the writings of Dr. Sykes, than it was in
 the power of the committee of convocation
 of 1717, to withhold, or take away, by in-
 direct reflection or threat, when they openly
 assailed the then bishop of Bangor.^r

^q See *Memoirs* of Tho. Hollis, esq. F.R. and A.S.S.
 4to. 1780. vol. i. pages 326, 429.

^r See the *Report*, &c. concerning the bishop of Ban-
 gor’s *Preservative* and *Sermon*, p. 23; where the com-
 mittee say, “ Nor are we ignorant, that several of-
 “ fensive books have of late time been published by
 “ other writers, whose confidence doth loudly call for
 “ the animadversions of the synod; to which also we
 “ shall be ready to contribute our endeavours.”

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QUESTIONS,

Previous to Dr. MIDDLETON'S

FREE ENQUIRY, &c.

QUESTIONS
TWO

Previous to Dr. Middleton's
THE ENQUIRY, &c.

T W O
Q U E S T I O N S,

Previous to Dr. MIDDLETON'S

F R E E E N Q U I R Y,

Impartially Considered:

V I Z. *by Dr Sykes*

What are the Grounds upon which the
CREDIBILITY of MIRACLES, *in general,*
is founded?

A N D

Upon what Grounds the MIRACLES of the
GOSPEL, *in particular,* are credible?

To which is added,

A DISSERTATION upon *Mark xvi.*
17, 18. These Signs shall follow them that
believe, &c.

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Existence of Miracles, in general,
is founded?

AND

Upon what Grounds the Miracles of the
Gospel, in particular, are credible?

To which is added,

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MDCCLXXI.

THE
P R E F A C E.

I*T is not my Design in the following Papers to concern myself in the Controversy betwixt the Reverend Dr. MIDDLETON and his Adversaries, about the Continuance of the miraculous Powers in the Church of Christ. All who have hitherto appeared against the Doctor, agree in one thing, viz. in disapproving Mr. Locke's, and the Doctor's Opinion, that They ceased with, or about the End of the Apostolic Age; but no Two are agreed in the Point, How long they continued after. The learned Mr. Jackson does not contend for their Continuance below the Times of Origen, i. e. to the Year of Christ 250, or thereabouts. The Second that appeared against the Doctor carries them to the End of the Third Century, i. e. about*

P R E F A C E.

bout Fifty Years longer. Mr. Dodwell, who has wrote against his Adversary with a Temper highly commendable, extends the Age of Miracles to the Civil Establishment of Christianity; and adds, that "probably many wonderful Works were afterwards wrought for some great Ends." Mr. Church says—"We have reason to think that [the Power of Miracles] stopped SOME TIME AFTER the Civil Establishment of our Religion." And lastly, Mr. Whiston, with great Precision and Exactness, determines the Continuance of the true Christian Miracles to have been till the Year 383, i. e. till Seventy Years after the first Establishment of Christianity; and he assures us, that then the demoniacal, and Anti-christian, the Athanasian, Popish, Diabolical Miracles, or Wonders, began. It were to be wished, that He had told us, what the Difference is to a Spectator, betwixt a demoniacal Wonder, and a true Miracle; and by what Mark one might have distinguished an Antichristian from a True Miracle. But here we are left in the dark. However, as these learned Writers are all unanimous in Opposition to Dr. Middleton, and All declare that Miracles did not cease at the Age in which the Doctor says they did, one would naturally think that some Two of Them
at

P R E F A C E.

at least who argue so strenuously against him, should have agreed together about the Time, when so remarkable an Incident happened, as the ceasing of a Power so wonderful as the working of Miracles was. But fix upon the Hypothesis of which of these learned Gentlemen you will, you are sure to have Four out of Five against the Scheme you pitch on: And tho' These Writers have stopped as They have done, there are Others who have carried this Point to the End of the Fifth and Sixth Centuries; and they too think that there is strong Attestation given by the Fathers of Those Ages to the Miracles then said to be worked. And we all know that the Defenders of the Church of Rome assert and maintain this Power to be continued in That Church, even to This Day.

Perhaps Some may think it needless to determine a Point of this intricate Nature; and Some may think it impossible: And All will be apt to think, that an honest, able Man's Word of the Fourth or Fifth Century, is as much to be credited, as an honest, able Man's Word of the Second or Third, in a like Case. But, as I said, it is not my Design to enter into the Controversy between the Doctor and His Adversaries. If the Doctor be thought to have done wrong, in not having secured sufficiently
the

P R E F A C E.

the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, His Adversaries would have done well to have supplied that Defect.

As to my own Design, it is to shew the Credibility of the Miracles done by Christ and his Apostles: And as I could not do this without examining into the Grounds upon which the Credibility of Miracles, in general, stands, I was obliged to enter into That Question. And if the Miracles of the Gospel be once secured, the rest, I apprehend, may be considered as Matters of less moment; and a Man may be allowed to be a sincere Christian, who doubts of, or even denies, many a Miracle reported by either an Antient or Modern Historian.

Two QUESTIONS, previous
to Dr. MIDDLETON'S *Free En-
quiry*, impartially considered.

QUESTION I.

THE First Question, which ought
to be considered, and which seems
to be of no small Consequence, is,
*What are the Grounds, upon which
the Credibility of Miracles, in general, is
founded?*

There is certainly a particular Difficulty in
Enquiries about the *Credibility of Miracles* :
They are not only *unusual* Works, but *extra-
ordinary*, and beyond the Power of Man to
do ; and therefore *common Evidence* is very
rarely enough to satisfy a fair and candid En-
quirer, when he is searching, whether any
Man did perform the miraculous Works report-
ed of him. It seems to be a fair Question, and
not to be answered with a *Jest*, which St.
B Austin

Austin puts, as from some Unbelievers ^a,
 “ Why, say they, are not those Miracles,
 “ which you say were done formerly, now
 “ done? ” His Answer was ^b, “ He, that re-
 “ quires Miracles to be done *now*, in order
 “ to his Belief, is himself a great *Miracle*,
 “ who does not believe when *all the World*
 “ *believes*.” And then, without entering in-
 to the Grounds of the Credibility of Miracles,
 he refers to the *Scriptures* ^c, “ wherein what
 “ was done, and for the Belief of what Mi-
 “ racles were done,” is amply related.

Testimony, no doubt, has in all Cases its
 proper Weight: but as Truth or Falshood
 may be equally reported, and all things rela-
 ted are not therefore to be believed, merely
 because they are related, where-ever things
out of the common Course of Nature are told,
 they are in themselves liable to *Doubt* and
Suspicion: and as they are rather incredible
 than credible at the first View, every one
 has a Right to examine and see, whether there
 is not some magnifying of Incidents, or some
 Fraud, or Imposition, or some Trick made
 use of, which we are not able immediately to
 account for. The *Scriptures*, as St. *Austin*
 says,

^a Cur, inquiunt, nunc illa miracula, quæ prædicatis facta
 esse, non fiunt? *Aug. De Civit. Dei*, l. xxii. c. 8.

^b Quisquis adhuc prodigia, ut credat, inquit, magnum est
 ipse prodigium, qui mundo credente non credit. *Ibid.*

^c In eisdem quippe veracissimis libris cuncta conscripta
 sunt, & quæ facta sunt, & propter quod credendum facta
 sunt. *Ibid.*

says ^d, “ are indeed read, that they may be
 “ believed; nor would they be read, unless
 “ they were believed.” But yet every Man
 has a Right to enquire and to examine even
 into Them: and the Scriptures themselves
 commend the Piety and Care of the *Beræans*,
 who *searched the Scriptures daily, whether the*
things preached by the Apostles *were so*, as
 they declared them.

Hence a Necessity arises of examining into
 the *Possibility*, or the *Probability* of Facts re-
 ported: and it is on all hands allowed, that
 where one sees an *Impossibility* of any Fact,
 there all Assent ought to be denied; where
 one sees *no Impossibility* in the nature of the
 thing, there a high degree of *Improbability*
 will produce the same Effect. Now this is
 certainly the Method of proceeding in all *com-*
mon Cases; indeed in all, except where Mi-
 racles are concerned. But in this Particular,
 mere *Improbability* of the thing is not deemed
 sufficient to destroy all Credit; but one must
 consider either the *Impossibility* of the thing's
 being done, or its *Absurdity*, or its being *un-*
worthy the Interposition of Providence, or of
 any superior intelligent Being, who may be
 supposed to act in such a Case, or some such
 Reason, in order to determine its *Incredibi-*
lity.

B 2

It

^d Leguntur quippe in populis, ut credantur; nec in populis
 tamen nisi credita legerentur. Ibid.

It is hard to fix exactly the Limits of *Probability* even in natural Cases, since there are so many Cases, *uncommon*, and *extraordinary*, and vouched by so good Testimonies, that how much soever a Man may be at first surpris'd, yet upon consideration he cannot tell how to refuse his Assent. The Story is well attested of *Prusias*, Son of *Prusias*, King of *Bitbunia*, that ^e " he had, instead of upper
 " Teeth, one Bone extended thro' all his
 " upper Jaw, which answered equally well
 " the Use of Teeth, and was not at all disagreeable to the Sight." It may be hard to account for such a Fact; but since we see Nature abounds in extraordinary Productions, and such a thing is not *impossible*, and Bones shoot out and grow in all Creatures in a very unaccountable manner, we easily, in these Cases, assent to what we conceive possible, if the Witnesses of the Fact are credible.

But tho' we give our Assent to *uncommon* things of this nature, yet Stories are such sometimes, that no Vouchers are sufficient to gain Credit. Thus when Historians invent Accounts of things done before the Flood; or tell us of Giants 90, or 100, or 120 feet tall; or of Angels lying with Women, and getting Children on them; of *Egregori*, &c. —there certainly

^e Nam & Prusiæ Regis Bithyniæ filius, eodem nomine quo pater, pro superiori ordine Dentium unum os æqualiter extensum habuit, nec ad speciem deforme, neque ad usum ulla ex parte incommodum. *Valerius Max.* lib. i. c. 8.

certainly is a great want of Evidence for such Facts. And tho' one may believe a Man to have been *Ten* feet tall, yet when any Author tells us of Men *Ten times Ten* feet tall, he seems to be no more worthy of Credit, than another is, who tells us of *Pygmies*, or of Men less than *Pygmies*, or no bigger than one's *Thumb*; which seem equally the Subjects of Belief with those of the opposite Extreme; the one being much about as credible as the other.

The Difficulty is not lessened, but increased, when *Miracles* are related as performed by any Man, how strongly soever they may be vouched by Men of Reputation, in other respects. These are Facts, that seem beyond the Bounds of *common Probability*; and therefore they usually meet with small Credit, unless they have very particular Circumstances attending them. The best *Heathen Writers* give us Instances of Miracles done by *Vestal Virgins*, by *Roman Emperors*, and by many particular private Persons; and yet their Testimonies are not sufficient to gain any Credit to their Relations with *Christians*. Or if they report to us the Apparitions of their Gods, or that *Castor* and *Pollux*, e. gr. helped the *Roman Dictator* at the Lake *Regillus*, and routed their Enemies, —it is thought more likely to be the *General's*, or somebody's Fiction, rather than a real Appearance of those Deities; and the Attestation of *Roman Historians* to the
Story

Story goes for little more than Fable or Romance, notwithstanding ^f “ the very Mark of “ the Hoof of *Castor*’s Horse was shewn at “ *Regillus* upon a Stone there.”

Nor, if Miracles are attested with all the Circumstances of *Persons*, and *Times*, and *Places*, minutely set down, is this sufficient to gain Credit. For it is certain, that many so particularly described, stand condemned as Fabulous Reports; and their Historians are not of sufficient Authority to have the Assent of their Readers. And if the *Po-pish* Miracles, or any of the ancient *Heathen* ones, are rejected as Fabulous, notwithstanding such minute and particular Evidence; it will follow, that in order to make *Testimony* credible in behalf of *Miracles*, something must be produced, that may point out, which are to be admitted, and which are to be rejected, when the Accounts of them are equally minute and circumstantial.

Some of the Miracles of *Apollonius* of *Ty-ana* were such, that the *Pagans* of old seemed to triumph over the *Christians* in them, and frequently made a Parallel betwixt Them and Those of Christ; and even gave the Preference to the Philosopher, as acting at least the more able and dextrous Part, and applying the miraculous Powers he had, more like
a wife

^f Illud in filice quod hodie apparet apud Regillum, tanquam vestigium ungulae Castoris Equi. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 3. c. 5.

a wise and knowing Man, than *Jesus* did. The Impostor, *e. g.* ^g “ when called into
 “ Judgment before *Domitian*, who designed
 “ to punish him, suddenly disappeared in the
 “ Courts of Justice, conveying himself away ;
 “ whereas *Jesus*, when brought before *Pi-*
 “ *late*, was condemned and crucified.” This
 shews how little the *Heathens* understood the
 Reason of our Saviour’s *Death*, and what Use
 they thought his miraculous Powers were to
 be applied to. They tell us of *Apollonius* ^h
 “ understanding the Voices of Animals :”
 “ his ⁱ “ understanding all Languages :” his
 “ ^k raising a Girl, that was dead, to Life at
 “ *Rome* :” and his ^l “ casting out Devils.”
Eusebius easily refutes all this, and more of
 such Pretensions, by shewing the *Absurdity*
 and *Folly* of *Apollonius*’s Actions. And tho’ it
 is certain ^m, that he received great Honours,
 both during his Life and after his Death, be-
 ing honoured *as a God* ^m, and this is credited
 upon the Authority of good Writers ; yet few
 or none are so weak, as to believe the Relati-
 ons

^g Qui [*Apollonius*] cum *Domitianus* eum punire vellet, repente in Judiciis non comparuit :—Ille [*Christus*]—& comprehensus est & cruci affixus. *Laet.* l. v. c. 3.

^h Καὶ ἐς σύνεσιν τῶν ζώων φωνῆς ἤλθε. *Hierocles* apud *Euseb.* lib. 1.

ⁱ Πασῶν γλώττων συνεῖς. *Ibid.* è lib. 2.

^k Ἐπὶ τῇ Ρωμαίων πόλει μὲν ταῦτα Κόρειον — μὲν δὲ θάνατον ὅτι δατέραν ζωὴν ἤγαγεν. *Ibid.* è lib. 4. Ille mortuis vitam reddidit. *Vopisc.* in *Aurelian.*

^l Δαίμονας ὅς αὖτε λαύνει. *Euseb.* è lib. 4.

^m Vid. *Bayle*’s Dict. APOLLONIUS. Note F. F.

ons made by the same Writers, where any of his *Miracles* are mentioned. Now why are not the same Authors to be equally credited in the one Case, as the other?

But let us pass to the *Miracles* reported to be done by the *Papists*. They are told with so many Circumstances, as to *Time*, *Place*, *Person*, *Manner*, and vouched by Men of such Eminence upon an *exact* and *minute* Search, that if strong Attestation were sufficient to gain Credit to such Facts, it would be hard to deny it to what they relate. The Life of *Francis Xavier*, who first carried the Gospel into *India* and *Japan*, is wrote by *Horatius Tursellinus* ⁿ “with as much *Faithfulness* and *Diligence* as he could apply.” And tho’ he was not an *Eye-witness* of the Facts he relates, yet They were such, as were communicated by the King of *Portugal*’s Order by his Deputy Governor in *India*, or by such as were at those Times ^o “either in *China* or *Japan*, and which *Horace* inserted in their proper Places in a subsequent Edition of his Book.” How many *Miracles* did this *Holy Man*, this Man of *extraordinary*

ⁿ Scripseram Xaverii vitam quanta maxima potui vel Diligentia vel Fide. Horatii Tursellini Vita Xaverii. Præf.

^o Lusitani Regis Jussu ab Indiæ Prorege egregia Francisci facta conquirerentur, ea ferme perscripta sunt, quæ ille in Lusitana ditione præclare gesserat.—Itaque cum nuper hæc quoque ab his, qui per id tempus apud Sinas vel Japones versabantur, conscripta in manus meas aliquando pervenissent, feci—ut ea—in Latinum converterem, & cum fide suis intexerem locis. *Ibid.*

ordinary Piety, work, if his *Faithful* Historian may be believed? ^p “ It is evident enough, “ that many sick in that Coast were healed “ by him : many possessed were cured. There “ is a Report, neither *obscure* nor *dubious*, “ that there were *Three Men raised from the* “ *Dead*, besides a Girl, of whom I shall “ speak hereafter. — A young Man, of no “ mean Fortune, died, who presently being “ brought to *Francis*, with great Lamenta- “ tion was laid at his Feet. The *Father* “ [*Francis*] taking him by the Hand, bid “ him in the Name of Christ arise : The “ young Man immediately arose, being re- “ stored to Life.” — “ A Boy fell into a “ Well, and died : He [*Francis*] bid the “ Mother be of good chear, and told her, that “ the Boy was not dead. *Francis* went to “ the Woman’s House ; fell on his Knees, “ and having spent some time in Prayer, “ signed the lifeless Boy’s Body with the Sign “ of the Cross : immediately the Boy leaped “ out of the Coffin, not only alive, but per- “ fectly well.” There is no occasion to mention at large other Miracles, which he did,

C

or

^p Satis constat plurimos ab eo in illa maritima ora *ægros* sanatos esse ; multos *energumenos* liberatos. Nec obscura aut dubia fama est tres inibi excitatos à mortuis præter puellam Cangoximanam, de qua suo loco dicetur. — Hic adolescens quidam minime obscuro loco natus mortem obierat. Qui confestim ad Franciscum delatus à suis, cum ingenti complo- ratione ante ejus pedes ponitur. Itaque eum Pater manu prehensum

or is said to have done : Such are, ⁹ “ his Cure
 “ of *Michael Fernandes* of the Stone. He gave
 “ a Lame Man the Power of Walking ; to
 “ Two Dumb Men the Power of Speaking ;
 “ to Two Deaf Men the Power of Hearing ;
 “ and to many, that were at the Point of
 “ Death, when there were no Hopes of Re-
 “ covery, did he restore Health of Body, ei-
 “ ther by the Sign of the Cross, or by sprink-
 “ ling them with Holy Water.” It is need-
 less, I say, to recite more from the same Au-
 thority : he assures us of the Witnesses, who
 were present at the Performance of several of
 these miraculous Operations. Their Names
 are specified, who bore their Testimonies to
 the Truth of these Facts ; and yet none but a
professed

prehensum Christi nomine surgere jubet. Ille continuo sur-
 git haud dubie redivivus.—Ibidem Christiana mulier Francis-
 cum adiit, & flens ac suam orbitatem deplorans, suppliciter
 obsecrabat, ut ad parvum filium suum nuper in puteo ex-
 tinctum accedere non gravaretur. Tum ille negans puerum
 esse mortuum, bono esse animo mulierem jubet, eique protin-
 us morem gerit. Ad ejus testata ubi ventum est, procumbit
 in genua. Deum aliquandiu precatus, exanime pueri corpus
 signat cruce. Extemplo exhibit puer è feretro, non vivus mo-
 do sed etiam valens. *Ibid.* lib. ii. c. 7.

⁹ In Insula Ceilano Michaellem Fernandum, graviter ex cal-
 culo laborantem, invisens, bono animo magnaue Dei fidu-
 cia esse jussit : se postridie rem divinam pro illo facturum ;
 nec dubitare, quin propitiato Deo, spe maturius animi cor-
 porisque recuperaturus esset vigorem. Idque ita prorsus
 evenit.

Satis constant claudio ingrediendi, mutis duobus loquendi,
 totidem surdis audiendi facultatem, à Francisco redditam.
 Moribundis etiam multis ad eum deportatis, Crucis Signo,
 vel Aquæ Sacræ Aspersione, desperatam sanitatem corporis
 restitutam. *Ibid.* lib. vi. c. 2.

professed Papist believes a tittle of these Stories.

We may take a second Instance from the Life of *Antony of Padua*, as he is commonly called. This Saint's Life is filled with Miracles, vouched by Men of Character and Fortune and Figure in the World. It was wrote first in *Spanish* by *Michael Pithecus*, Counsellor to his Catholic Maieſty; then translated into *Italian* by *Francis Maria Vicius*; afterwards it was turned into the *German* Language by the very noble *John Baptist Burchet*, Aſſeſſor of the Greater Senate of *Lucern*; and, laſtly, made *Latin* by the Conventual Brethren of *Lucern*. Who would not imagine, that there might be ſome Truth in the Miracles of this Saint? They are vouched very ſolemnly; and ^r “ Antiquity, “ that invented the Fables of *Orpheus's* moving Rocks and Woods, and *Arion* Dolphins, with their Muſic,” is treated as it deſerves. But, ſays my Author, “ the Fact “ was true in the Caſe of *Antony*; for he called the *Beaſts*, and *They* hearkened moſt “ attentively to him; and his Voice was of “ ſuch

C 2

^r Finxit fecunda fabularum Antiquitas petras & ſylvulas Orphei muſicis concentibus excitas, illeſos etiam fidibus Arionis Delphinos—quo vellent obaudire. Fabula ſunt hæc, & à veritate remotiſſima. —Attamen hic in veritate ſe res habebat. —Siquidem Antonius Beſtias accerſit, quæ promptiſſimis & attentis auribus auſcultant. Tantarum erat vox ejus virium, cui vel Piſcium horum natura libenter obſecundaret. *Vita & Miracula S. Antonii de Padua*, p. 86.

“ such Force, that even *Fish* obeyed him.”
 One may well apply to him, what *Horace*
 said on another occasion,

O mutis quoque Piscibus
Donature cygni, si libeat, sonum.
Totum muneris hoc tui est.

Lib. iv. Od. 3.

I mention not these Follies with any other View, than to shew what Nonsense, what Absurdity, has been obtruded on the World under the Pretence of History: and to observe, at the same time, that the Historian, who may be credited in *ordinary* Occurrences, yet is not to be trusted or believed without strict Examination, when he relates extraordinary Facts. What bears him out in the One Case, will not gain him Credit in the Other, unless he can produce something very peculiar and extraordinary to vouch for what he relates. On the other hand, it is not enough in the Reader of such miraculous Stories to say, as Bishop *Atterbury*^s did—“ In
 “ *China* or *Japan* these Wonder-workers may
 “ pretend to have done as many Miracles as
 “ they please, without the fear of a Discover-
 “ ry: in *Spain* or *Italy* they may venture
 “ now and then to set up for them, when there
 “ are so many always ready to favour their
 “ Pretences,

^s Vid. *Atterbury*'s Sermons published by Dr. *Moore*, Vol. I.
 Serm. 1. p. 18, 19.

“ Pretences, and to run into any pious Fraud
 “ that can be contrived for them:”—it is not
 just, I say, to argue thus. For if *real* Mi-
 racles be done any where, at *Jerusalem* or
Smyrna, in *Africa* or in *Egypt*, this way of
 raising a Difficulty or Objection will equally
 lie against them all; since no Man is obliged
 to go from home, in order to discover a Fraud,
 or to be convinced of a Truth. This sort of
 Common-place Topic shews more of Con-
 tempt of, than of Argument against, a Fact;
 and, as Miracles may be true, tho’ done at a
 distance; so what is represented as such, and
 done at home, may be the Effect of Fraud
 and Imposition.

Sometimes indeed there are particular Cir-
 cumstances, which give plain and just ground
 to suspect, nay even to deny, that a Man did
 ever any Miracles at all, notwithstanding some
 are confidently reported to be done by Him.
Ribadeneira the *Jesuit*, when he was a Boy,
 “ not above Fourteen Years of Age, was
 “ brought to be familiarly acquainted with
 “ *Ignatius* of *Loyola*, and was present with
 “ him at home, abroad, in all things obser-
 “ ving his Words, his Actions, his Counte-
 “ nance, and his Motions.” This made it,
 that he was enabled to know his *intimatest*
 Affairs, and what *few* only could come at the
 true Knowledge of, as well as those things,
 that were open, and easily known to all. All
Ignatius’s Disciples were greatly desirous of
 knowing

knowing every minute thing, which any ways related to his Life and Actions; by what Means, and by what Beginnings, and by what Progress he had brought about his Schemes. *Ribadeneira* accordingly tells us^t,
 “ That with the greatest Diligence he had
 “ searched into all things relating to *Ignatius*:
 “ that he had desired, and importuned, and
 “ insisted on *Ignatius*’s telling the Course of
 “ his Life; and that he had obtained this Fa-
 “ vour of him.” In this Life therefore one might be sure to meet with an Account of the *Miracles*, which *Ignatius* did, if ever he performed any. And it is very remarkable, that when *Ribadeneira* comes at last to give the Character of this Saint, he puts the Question,
 — “ How comes it to pass, that the Holiness of this Man is not attested by Miracles;
 “ and His Life, as well as those of many
 “ Saints, is not made famous by Signs, and
 “ the Manifestations of great Powers.” It is plain, that *Ribadeneira*, with all his Industry and Opportunity, had never heard of any Miracles done by *Ignatius*; for if he had, he would

^t Quamobrem summa diligentia res omnes Ignatii investigavimus, & ex eo ipso præteritæ vitæ rationes tantopere audire cupivimus, postulavimus, efflagitavimus. Ipse vero continuis precibus, & ardenti nostrorum studio cessit tandem, & se vinci passus est. *Ribadeneira Vit. Ignatii*, p. 12.

^u Quid causæ est, quamobrem illius [Ignatii] Sanctitas minus est testata Miraculis; &, ut multorum Sanctorum, Vita signis declarata, virtutumque Operationibus insignita? *Ibid.* Lib. v. c. 13.

would certainly have inserted them. But instead of That, he makes a long Apology for his not having exerted such a Power. “ That
 “ God alone knows at what Place, and what
 “ Time, and by whose Prayers, Miracles
 “ should be done : ” That “ *John the Bap-*
 “ *tist*, than whom a greater was not born of
 “ Women, did no Miracle : ” That “ very
 “ many others, most Holy Men, Lights and
 “ Ornaments of the Catholic Church, had
 “ been entirely unknown, if the Light of
 “ Miracles had been necessary to illustrate
 “ their Glory. What Miracles do we read
 “ of St. *Austin* ? What of *Athanasius*, *Chry-*
 “ *ostom*, the Two *Gregories*, of *Nazianzen*
 “ and *Nyssa* ? ” And much is there said to
 this purpose.

It may be said, perhaps, that *Ribadeneira*, like a faithful and just Historian, related what had come to his Knowledge : but it does not follow, because *He* knew nothing of any miraculous Powers exerted by *Ignatius*, that therefore the Holy Man never did exert any such Virtue.

This is true : But it must be observed, that *Ribadeneira* first published his Life of *Ignatius* in 1572 ; and Fifteen Years afterwards, viz. in 1587, he republished it by the Command of *Claudius Aquaviva*, and added many things, which wth “ certain grave Men, in-
 “ timately

^w Libellum hunc de vita Ignatii—ante annos quindecim—
 Latine conscripsi—Multa mihi necessario addenda judicavi.
 Primum

“ intimately acquainted with *Ignatius*, and, as
 “ it were, *Eye-witnesses*, told him.” He
 thought these things of such Importance, that
 they were “ necessarily” to be *added*, as a
 Supplement to what he had before said.
 “ Some things, which had appeared *dubious*
 “ to him, he now found, upon an exact
 “ Search, to be *certain*, and he was fully sa-
 “ tisfied in.” And, lastly, he “ added some
 “ Sayings, and some Facts of *Ignatius*, with
 “ regard to the Discipline and Government
 “ of a Holy Life, and the Art and Skill of
 “ governing others.” Had *Ribadeneira* there-
 fore ever heard of any *Miracles* done by *Ignatius*, (who died in 1556, that is, Sixteen
 Years before the Publication of his Life) he
 would certainly have related them in his
 Book published in 1572; and much more
 would he have *added* them, could he have
 heard of any such, after so diligent a Search,
 when he *republished* his Book in 1587. If
 later Writers therefore attribute Miracles to
Ignatius, one may justly impute them to In-
 vention and Imposition; since a Writer, will-
 ing to do all the Honour he could to his
 Friend, was not able to find any Instance of
 such

Primum nova quædam, quæ, post libellum excusum, gravissi-
 mi viri, & Ignatio valde familiares — quasi testes oculati de
 ipso Ignatio nobis retulerunt. Tum alia, quæ dubia antea
 mihi erant, & diligenti postea inquisitione investigata, certa
 esse comperi. Deinde etiam nonnulla dicta factaque Ignatii
 adjeci, quæ ad sanctissimæ vitæ pertinent disciplinam, & ad
 præstantem alios gubernandi prudentiam. *Ibid. Præf. 1587,*

such Power exerted by him; or one may reasonably deny, or at least suspect such Facts, since they were unknown to those who lived within *Thirty Years* of his Death. Father *Bouhours* therefore may pretend to tell us of Miracles done by *Ignatius*: He may talk of his “dispossessing Devils from Persons;” of his “driving away evil Spirits, which haunted the College of *Loretto*, by the public reading of his Letters in the House;” of his “recovering a Man that had Hanged himself, by his praying to God to give him only so much Life, as might serve him to make his Confession.” A Grant! which was given, and the resuscitated Person immediately died after he had *confessed*. These, and many more, which have been reported of him by later Writers, may justly, I say, be *suspected*, because they were quite unknown to *Rabadeneira*, and others, during *Ignatius’s* Life, and many Years after his Death; or were not deemed by them to have been miraculous.

But supposing that we had not ground for *Suspicion*, from the Silence of so inquisitive a Writer, that *Ignatius* worked no Miracles; yet the things themselves, which later Authors have told, come not within any degree of Probability. *Maffei* has related a tolerable Collection of Miracles done by *Ignatius*: and he speaks of “more which were told of him; but as he was not sufficiently certain
D “ of

“ of their Truth, he did not think himself
 “ obliged to mention them ^x.” When he
 says this, he seems to have some doubt about
 the Miracles of his Saint; for he adds *This*, as
 his Reason for not mentioning what he had
 heard about *Ignatius's* Miracles—^y “ especial-
 “ ly because the Holiness of Men, famous
 “ in their Times, is not manifested so much
 “ by *Signs* and *Miracles*, as by Love of God
 “ and Innocence of Life.” A Reason this!
 which should have made *Maffei* as cautious
 of what he said about *Ignatius's* Miracles, as
Ribadeneira had been before him.

The *Jesuits* have always been great Mi-
 racle-mongers, where-ever they have come.
 When they came into *Japan*, they no sooner
 baptized People, but some or other had Mi-
 racles worked upon them. ^z “ One of their
 “ new Converts, blind, thirteen Years of
 “ Age, as soon as he was baptized, received
 “ a perfect Sight.” Another, “ that had been
 “ afflicted with a Palsy two or three Months,
 “ and

^x Alia item de Ignatio miranda narrantur; quæ, quia mihi
 haud satis explorata sunt, necesse non habui adscribere. *Maf-
 feius* Vita Ignatii, lib. iii. c. xiv.

^y Præsertim quod clarorum hominum Sanctitas, non tam
 Signis atque Miraculis, quam charitate in Deum & vitæ Inno-
 centia continetur. *Ibid.*

^z Unus ex iis, cæcus, 13 natus annos, simul ac baptizatus
 est, integrum oculorum lumen recepit. — Christianus quidam
 Paralyti duorum triumve mensium spatio laboraverat. Is Ma-
 gicis Artibus, de gentis more, dum à propinquis curatur, eti-
 am mutus efficitur. Cujus casum miseratus item Christianus
 cœlestis aqua lavacri quam sumserat domi nostræ conspergit
 hominem. Ille surrexit statim & locutus est. *Emanuel A-
 costa*, Histor. rerum in Oriente gestorum, p. 72, 74.

“ and whose Friends had tried by *Magic Arts*,
 “ as the Custom of the Nation is, to cure
 “ him; instead of a Cure, he was made
 “ Dumb. A Christian, who had Compassion
 “ on his Misfortune, sprinkled the Man with
 “ some Water of the Heavenly Font, which
 “ he took out of *our* [*i. e.* the Jesuits] House,
 “ and the Paralytic Dumb Man presently rose
 “ and spoke.” Again: a “ A Woman trou-
 “ bled with a constant Hiccough, even whilst
 “ she was eating or speaking, was cured by
 “ Baptism.” Another, that was “ possess’d,
 “ as soon as she became a Christian, the De-
 “ vil left her.”

Now the Question is, What *Credit* is due
 to this Sort of Historical Facts, or Relations?
 They are told with as much Assurance, and
 as positively asserted, as any other Facts rela-
 ted by these Historians; and yet all Prote-
 stants constantly treat these Miracles as Impo-
 sitions, or as Accidents improved, or as casu-
 al things magnified, or as Assertions without
 Grounds; and the Historians as Men not com-
 petently informed, or so far prejudiced, as not
 to be of sufficient Integrity to be believed in
these Cases, tho’ in other Historical Narrati-
 ons due Deference is paid to their Authority.

The *Jesuits* indeed are charged with la-
 bouring under a most deplorable Want of Ho-
 nesty;

D 2

* Mulierum assiduo singultu, etiam dum loqueretur & ci-
 bum caperet, jamdiu laborantem, per Baptismum eo vitio la-
 boravit. Aliam Energumenam, ut primum Christiana facta
 est, Dæmon reliquit. *Idid.* p. 109.

neſty ; and their Morality has been ſo bad, and their Caſuiſtry ſo looſe, that no one ought to depend too much on what they affirm or deny, if their Intereſt, or that of their Society, be any ways concerned. Say then, that *Their* Accounts of Miracles are not to be admitted. Were thoſe Holy and Good Men, that lived *Twelve* or *Thirteen Hundred* Years ago, or perhaps a Century higher ſtill, as little to be credited, as theſe Moderns, who certainly are not to be credited ? Are Thoſe Men of old to be put upon a level with ſuch notorious Violators of Truth, as the *Jefuits* are known to have been ? Surely, more is due to Their Characters ; and we have poſitive Evidences of Miracles done in *Their* Times : Miracles, wrought before good Men, able to judge, and honeſtly diſpoſed to tell the whole Truth. If the Miracles related by the *Jefuits* may be ſuſpected, or treated as Impoſtures ; may not thoſe related by the Good Men of old, be vindicated to the Satisfaction of any, or every Man of Senſe ?

Here it is certain we change the Scene, and get into Times that ſeem to beſpeak Reverence and Reſpect. But whether the Grounds of Credibility alter with Ages, is the Point in Debate. When Men of Abilities, and Learning, and Honeſty, and to all appearance good Information, relate *Miracles*, their Teſtimony does not, in fact, meet with that Credit, which ſuch Characters may ſeem to promiſe ;

nor

nor do all these concurring Circumstances afford that Satisfaction (at least they do not always afford it) which a Man of Sense requires. Suppose, *e. g.* the Miracles, which are said to be done by St. *Martin* — reported by no less learned a Man than *Sulpitius Severus* — attested with all solemn *Appeals to God* for the Truth of the Facts, and of his Relation — upon *strong Evidence* — upon a Resolution to declare the *Truth* — upon a *Competence of Knowledge* to judge of the Truth — and as much *Honesty* in the Narration, as any one can reasonably ask — Does his Account of St. *Martin's* Miracles give Satisfaction to any Enquirer after Truth? ^b “ I beg, says he, of
 “ those, who shall read what I write, that
 “ they would believe what I say; and that
 “ they would not think, that I have wrote
 “ any thing, but what I have found to be cer-
 “ tain and true: For I had rather have been
 “ quite silent, than say any thing that is
 “ false.” *Sulpitius* concludes his Life with this Profession — ^c “ I am conscious to my-
 “ self, that I was impelled by a *full Persua-*
 “ *sion* of the *Truth* of the things related,
 “ and by a *Love of Christ*, to write these
 “ things;

^b Obsecro autem eos, qui lecturi sunt, ut fidem dictis adhibeant, neque me quicquam nisi compertum & probatum scripsisse arbitrentur: Alioquin tacere quam falsa dicere maluisssem. *Sulpit. Vit. Martini. c. 1.*

^c Ego mihi conscius sum, me rerum fide & amore Christi impulsam ut hæc scriberem, manifesta exposuisse, vera dixisse. *Ibid. apud finem.*

“ things; and I am fully convinced in my
 “ own Mind, that I have declared things
 “ well known, and have told *nothing but the*
 “ *Truth.*” There plainly runs thro’ all *Sul-*
pitius’s Discourses such an Affection for St.
Martin, and for all his Sayings, as well as
 for all his Actions, as shews him to have had
 the highest Esteem for his Person: And he
 relates every thing in such a manner, as ma-
 nifests almost an implicit Faith in him, and
 in whatever he said. When he was telling a
 miraculous Escape, that St. *Martin* had out
 of the midst of the *Flames* (the *Flames* were
 all around him, and he unhurt; and he had
 been so long in them, that the Monks con-
 cluded that he was burnt to death) when *Se-*
verus, I say, was telling this miraculous
 Escape, he appeals to ^d “ *God*, as a Witness of
 “ his Words, that the Saint himself related
 “ to him the Story, that the Fire raged a-
 “ gainst him, as long as he tried to break
 “ open the Doors to get out; but as soon as
 “ he resorted to the Help of the *Cross*, and
 “ took to the Arms of *Prayer*, the *Flames*
 “ where

^d Mediis flammis totus ad Dominum conversus incubuit.
 Tum vero divinitus igne submoto, innoxio sibi orbe flamma-
 rum orabat. Monachi—mediis flammis Martinum auferunt,
 cum jam penitus esse consumptus tam diuturno incendio pu-
 taretur. Cæterum, ut *verbis meis Dominus est testis*, mihi ip-
 se referebat—tam diu circa se sævisse ignem, quamdiu erum-
 pere Ostium turbatus mente tentaverit: Ubi vero auxilium
 Crucis & Orationis arma repetisset, medias cessisse flammæ,
 seque tunc sensisse *rorantes*, quas male esset expertus *urentes*.
Sulpitius. Ep. 1.

“ where he stood, *all retired* from him, and
 “ he *felt* them [*rorantes*] *cool like Water*,
 “ which before he had to his great Pain felt
 “ to be *burning*.” Nor was this peculiar to
 St. *Martin* thus to feel *Fire, cold*. It is ob-
 served in the History of the Martyrdom of
 that *Apostolic Teacher, Polycarp*, that it was
 no uncommon thing for the Martyrs to
 e “ have the *Fire*, which their inhuman
 “ Torturers cast them into, *cold* to them.”
 At the Close of *Severus's First Dialogue*, in
 which he relates some Stories, not unlike roman-
 tic ones, concerning the *Eastern Monks*, he is
 preparing to give an Account of St. *Martin's*
 Virtues; and professes, that he does not so
 much design f “ to speak any thing, which he
 “ had heard from others, as what he had
 “ SEEN HIMSELF.” And so, in his *Third*
Dialogue, he declares, that “ *he will speak,*
 “ *fide Testis, non Oratoris copia, upon the*
 “ *Faith of a Witness, and not enlarging upon*
 “ *things as an Orator, c. 2.*” He then ap-
 peals to *Evagrius's* Testimony for the Truth
 of *Martin's* g “ Cure of a dumb Girl of 12
 “ Years of Age, (who never had spoken at
 “ all) by putting a little *consecrated Oil* into
 “ her Mouth, after he had exorcised her.”
 The Cure was done, *Evagrius* being present
 at

e Καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἦν αὐτοῖς ψυχρὸν, τὸ τῶ ἀπλωῶν βασανιστῶν.
 Mart. Polycarpi.

f Nec vero audita ab aliis potius quam quæ vidi ipse dictu-
 rus sum. Dial. i. apud finem.

g Res ipso præsentē tum gesta est. c. 2.

at it. It is not much farther, in the same *Dialogue*, c. 5. that he disclaims ^h “ all telling of any *Lye* in behalf of the good Saint ; “ and appeals to Christ, that he has said nothing, nor would say any thing, but what “ either He Himself had SEEN, or what he “ had come to the Knowledge of from *sure* “ *Witnesses*, or from *Martin* himself.” And he adds, that tho’ he chose “ to dress up what “ he said in the form of a Dialogue, yet I “ declare, says he, *before God*, that I keep “ to the exact Truth of an History.” ⁱ

I do not design to repeat from *Severus* the Miracles which St. *Martin* did : perhaps if I did, I should be thought to turn into Ridicule, what he relates with great Seriousness. I refer therefore the Reader to him ; but what is here to be considered is, That since we have so *faithful* an Account given of a great Number of Miracles performed by so good, and so *holy* a Man, as *Martin* is said to have been, by an *Eye-witness*, by ^k “ so “ *learned* and *wise* a Man” as *Severus*, as *Austin* calls him ; ^l “ a Man famous, as “ well

^h Neque enim hoc Martinus indiget, ut mendaciis adferatur. c. 5.

ⁱ Sed tamen totius sermonis fidem apud te, Christe, depromimus, nos nec alia dixisse, neque alia dicturos, quam quæ aut IPSI VIDIMUS, aut quæ manifestis auctoribus, vel plerumque ipso referente, cognovimus. Cæterum etsi dialogi speciem—adsumpsimus, nos pie præstare profitemur historiæ veritatem. *Ibid.* c. 5.

^k Vir doctrina & sapientia pollens. *Augustinus.*

^l Vir genere & litteris pollens. *Gennadius.*

“ well for his Family, as his Learning ;” so *Gennadius* : “^m Holy, learned, eloquent ;” so *Sigonius*. Oneⁿ “ wise, upright, blessed, courageous, rich in the Lord,” as *Paulinus* calls him ; and in another place he pronounces him “^o blessed of the Lord, who in so worthy Language and just Affection had wrote the History of so great a Priest, and so notorious a Confessor :” — Since we have so *faithful* an Account, I say, by so great a Man, one cannot but own that he was *competently informed* of what he relates ; and he appears to have, throughout his History, as honest a Disposition to speak the *Truth*, and the *whole Truth*, and nothing but the Truth, as one would desire. And yet very few, if any, except such as pay a Regard to the *Age* in which the Saint lived, credit the Stories *Severus* has told of his intimate Friend and Acquaintance. It must be acknowledged, that this Historian was charged with *romancing* not a little, in relation to St. *Martin*, in his own Times ; and as he had heard of this Reproach, he vindicates himself, or attempts to do so, from the Charge of *telling Lies* on his behalf : But still it may be justly questioned, whether

E he

^m Sanctus, doctus, — — — *Sigonius*. Vid. Testimonies prefixed to the *Leipsic* Edition of *Severus*.

ⁿ Sapiens — rectus — beatus — fortis — dives in Domino. *Paulinus* Epist. i.

^o Benedictus igitur tu homo Domino, qui tanti sacerdotis & manifestissimi confessoris historiam, tam digno sermone quam justo affectu percensuisti. *Paulinus* Epist. v. ad *Severum*.

he has quite cleared himself from the Imputation he then laboured under ; or whether his Folly and Weakness be not as great as his Wisdom and Learning.

What then are we to do in such Cases as these, where honest Men, *Eye-witnesses*, affirm with so much Assurance Facts, that are so extraordinary, as all St. *Martin's* Miracles are? They are told indeed by one, that *saw* much of what he relates: But yet, several of them, at least, are of such a nature, that no one will think the Consequence good, that because God is able to produce such or such Events, that therefore he did do so. Facts *possible* to be done by God, must be considered in all their Circumstances: And if some are related, which bear about them evident Marks of *Improbability*, one cannot but *suspect*, or *suspend* one's Judgment, notwithstanding the Confidence with which they are told, unless there be some Circumstances more than *common Testimony*, which may lead one to give Credit to the Relation.

We have a remarkable Miracle, told at large by no less Authority than the Church of *Smyrna*, which happened in the Age after the Death of the Last of the Apostles: I mean That which happened at the Burning of that Apostolic Teacher *Polycarp*, who, as the *Chronicon Alexandrinum* tells us, was p “ *burnt*
“ *alive*

p Ἐκείνῃ ζῶν — ἔτι καὶ ἀπεκαλύετο αὐτῷ, τελειῶν αὐτὸν ζῶντα καὶ ὁμῶς. Chron. Alexand. p. 604. Edit. Raderi,

“ *alive* — for so it was *revealed* unto him,
 “ that being *burnt alive*, he should be made
 “ perfect.” What this *Revelation* was, appears
 as well from the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, as
 from the Extracts that were made of it by
Eusebius, and from later Historians. When
 the Martyr was ⁹ “ at Prayers, three days be-
 “ fore he was apprehended, he had, or he
 “ was in, a Vision; and he saw his Pillow,
 “ or what was laid under his Head, all *on*
 “ *Fire*. Turning himself to Those that were
 “ with him, he said *prophetically*, I must be
 “ *burnt alive*.” *Eusebius* tells the Story a
 little differently, adding some Circumstances,
e. g. that it was in the ^r *Night time*: That he
 “ saw what was under his Head, not only
 “ *burning*, but *quite consumed* by the Fire:”
 That, “ being waked out of his Sleep, he
 “ presently interpreted the Vision, almost
 “ foretelling what was to come, and openly
 “ declaring to those with him, That he must
 “ *by Fire* change his Life for the sake of
 “ Christ.” Soon after *Polycarp* was seized,
 and condemned to the Flames; and when he

E 2

was

⁹ Καὶ προσελάχοντο ἐν ὀπασίᾳ γέροντες, πρὸς τριῶν ἡμερῶν
 τῷ συλληφθῆναι αὐτὸν· καὶ εἶδεν προσκεφάλαιον αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ πυρὸς
 κατακαύον· καὶ στραφεὶς εἶπεν πρὸς τοὺς συνόντας αὐτῷ προ-
 φητικῶς, Δεῖ με ζῶντα κατακαυθῆναι. Martyr. Polycarpi.

^r Νύκτωρ ἰδεῖν τὸ ὑπὸ κεφαλῆς σκῶμα ἀνθρώπου ὥς ὑπὸ
 πυρὸς φλεχθῆναι δεδαπανῆσθαι, ἔξυπνον ὃ ὅτι τῷ τῷ γινόμενον,
 ἐνδὺς ὑπερμεῖναι τοῖς παρῶν τὸ φανέν, μονονυχὶ τὸ μέλλον
 προφασίσαντα, σαφῶς τε ἀνειπόντα τοῖς ἀμὲν αὐτὸν, ὅτι δεοὶ
 αὐτὸν διὰ χριστὸν πνεῖ τὴν ζῶν μεταλλάξαι. Euseb. Hist. Eccl.
 lib. iv. c. 15.

was on the Pile at Prayer, he expresses himself in full hopes, that he should be that day accepted by God, ^s “ as a well-pleasing Sacrifice, as he had foreordained it, and *manifested it before-hand*, and *fulfilled it.*” I must not omit, that before this there was a *Voice from Heaven*, that said to him, “ *Be of good Courage, Polycarp, and behave like a Man.*” And so indeed the good old Man seems to have done.

What now was the Event of this *Prophetic Vision*? or what was it that was “ manifested before-hand?” Was the old Man *burnt alive*, as he said he should be? No: ^t “ The Fire, forming a sort of Arch, or like the Sail of a Ship filled with Wind, surrounded, as with a Wall, the Body of the Martyr; and he was in it, not like Flesh burning, but as Bread baking, or as Gold and Silver in a Furnace melting and purifying by Fire.” If these Comparisons convey any Ideas to us, the Place where the Martyr was, was very *hot*, and would naturally have put an end to his Life; and had it done so, his *Prophecy* had been fulfilled. But, as if it

^s Ἐν θυσίᾳ πίονι καὶ προσδεκτῇ, καθὼς προηπίμασας καὶ προσεφάνερωσας, καὶ ἐπλήρωσας. Martyr. Polycarp. Euseb. *ibid.*

^t Τὸ πῦρ καμέρας εἶδ' ὅτι πιῆσαν ὥσπερ ὀθόνη πλοῖα ὑπὸ πνεύματ' ὀπλισμένη, κύκλῳ περικτείνουσα τὸ σῶμα τοῦ μάρτυρος καὶ ἦν μέσον, ὥς ὡς σὰρξ καίομένη, ἀλλ' ὥς ἀετ' ὀπλῶμεν, ἢ ὡς χρυσὸς καὶ ἀργυρ' ἐν καμίνῳ πυρὸς ἐμύχου. Mart. Polycarp.

it had been on purpose to shame all such as *pretended* to that heavenly Gift without having it, or for whatever other Reason, the “^u Fire not being able to consume his Body,” the Executioner was ordered to *stab* him; and instantly so much Blood issued from him, as put out the Fire. Thus died this “*Apostolical* and *Prophetic* Teacher; w “*for every* “*Word* that he spoke has been fulfilled, or “*will be fulfilled.*”

It is somewhat strange, that the Church of *Smyrna* should treat *Polycarp* all along as a *Prophet*; and should tell the Vision and the Interpretation of it; and then immediately should give an Account of his Death in Terms directly contrary to it. *He prophesied*, that he was to be *burnt alive*; and *They* tell us, that the Fire *could not*, did not, *burn him* at all. Nay, *They* observe (tho’ not particularly of Him) that the^x “Fire used by the inhuman Torturers of the Martyrs was even *cold* “*to them.*” It does not seem to have been so to *Polycarp*, if one may guess from the Comparisons made use of to explain this matter. However, the Centurion, who was at the Execution of the Martyr, perceiving some Contest about his *Body*, the Christians, y “*be-* “*ing*

^u Μὴ δυνάμενον αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς καταναθῆναι. Ibid.

^w Πᾶν γὰρ ῥῆμα ὃ εἶπεν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐτελειώθη, καὶ τελειωθήσεται. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 15.

^x Τὸ πῦρ ἦν αὐτοῖς ψυχρὸν τὸ τῶν ἀπλῶν βασανιστῶν. Ibid.

^y Μελλόντων ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς λαμβάνειν αὐτὸν. Ibid.

“ing willing to have taken it out of the *Fire*,” (tho’ the *Fire* was extinguished by the Martyr’s Blood) the Centurion, I say, ^z “putting him in the middle of the *Fire*, burnt him,” after he was *dead*. So that in fact he was not *burnt alive*, but when he was *dead*; directly contrary to his Prophecy.

I enter not into the Story of the *Dove* flying out of His Body, which, whether it was omitted by *Eusebius*, or added since his Time; or whether it be a Corruption of ἀπ’ αἰσέρεα, which I am more inclined to, than any other Emendation I have met with—I enter not into this, nor into that ^a “prodigious Fragrance,” which his Body within the Arch of *Fire* emitted. The Bodies of dying and dead Saints do usually, it seems, emit very *fragrant Smells*, as all the Writers of the Lives of Saints assure us. Is there not, upon the whole, ground to *doubt*, or *suspect* a Story, where one sees there has been tampering? That God could preserve the Body of *Polycarp* from the Flames, is no doubt *possible*. But that God should *reveal* it to him, that He should be “*burnt alive*,” and then should *preserve* him from the *Fire*, is not easily to be believed. That the *Church* of *Smyrna* should believe, and call him a *Prophet*, or say

^z Θείς αὐτὸν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πυρὸς ἔκαυσιν. Ibid.

^a Καὶ γὰρ εὐωδίας τσαύτης ἀντελαβόμεθα, ὥς λιβανωτὲς πνέοντες, ἢ ἄλλε πνὸς τῶν πλείων ἀρωμάτων. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 15.

say that "every Word he spoke was fulfilled," in Contradiction to Fact, is ground for Jealousy of *Their Veracity*. The very Account of the *burning* him *after his Death*, is at best very inaccurately told. And the saying that *Fire* was *cold* to the Martyrs, will make a Man *suspicious*, that they were not averse to exaggerate Matters, or to talk in very strong Figures. However, if any one imagines the Relation made by the Church of *Smyrna* on this occasion to be just and faithful, he has a Right to *believe* it: But should another think, that their Relation has suffered in going thro' the Hands of Transcribers; or that the *Manner* in which these Papers were discovered by the *Ghost* of *Polycarp*, after they had been lost some time; or that the Narration itself has some Marks of *Improbability*; he has a Right to suspend his Assent, till he can meet with further Information, just as he does by other historical Facts, that are *incredible* in their own nature, and are attended with no Circumstance, from whence one can argue the *Probability* of a miraculous Interposition.

What then? Will you refuse Assent to so good, so pious, so honest Vouchers? Can the Authority of *Eye-witnesses* be called in question? Or can the *Power* of God, when it is attested by such Spectators of it, be a matter of Doubt?

The *Power* of God is not the point in question, but the *Veracity* of *Witnesses*; and
if

if the Circumstances of their Narrations are such, as make the thing *incredible* in itself, every one has a right to *doubt* of, or to reject such a Story, with—*Sit fides penes authorem*. Believe the Story, if you think proper; but do not condemn others, who think they have reason to doubt. For what is the great Good, if you receive such a Story; or what is the great Harm, if you reject it?

Again; There is an Account of a Miracle in the Church of our *Saviour's Ascension* ^b, That “that Place, from which our Lord was
“ taken up in a Cloud, and ascended into
“ Heaven, was so *consecrated* by his *divine*
“ *Footsteps* upon it, that it would never suf-
“ fer it be *covered* with Marble, or any other
“ Pavement whatever; the Ground itself *re-*
“ *jecting*, and throwing off every thing, by
“ which any one attempted to adorn it.”
No doubt this is possible, if one considers the mere *Power* of God; but yet the Credibility of the Fact depends upon the mere Authority of the Vouchers, and will hardly be believed, however it is attested by no less a Man than *Paulinus*; who seems to have credited the thing, tho’ he relates it only as *reported*.

It

^b Mirum vero inter hæc, quod in Basilica Ascensionis, locus ille tantum, de quo in nube susceptus ascendit—ita sacratu divinis vestigiis *dicitur*, ut nunquam tegi marmore, aut paviri receperit, semper excussis, solo respuente, quæ manus adornandi studio tentaverit apponere. *Paulin. Epist. xi. ad Severum.*

It is very hard for any one to call in question a good Man's Veracity, when he professes to relate what he himself had SEEN ; yet Stories so vouched are so incredible sometimes, that the solemnest Affeверations pass for no Evidence. I will not insist on what the Author, who personated St. *Austin*, tells us, c " That after he was Bishop of *Hippo*, he, " with other Servants of Christ, went to " preach the Gospel to the *Ethiopians*, and " there he saw Men and Women without " Heads, and that their Eyes were in their " Breasts. In the lower Parts of *Ethiopia*, " we saw Men, says he, with one Eye only, and That in their Foreheads." Had he said, that he saw the People, whom *Pliny* or *Mela* describe in that manner, it might have been a little more tolerable. But let him affirm ever so strongly upon his *Eye-sight* such Men and Women ; yet, I imagine, it will meet with but small Reception amongst those, who are not superstitious, or credulous.

So when *Paulinus* gives us a remarkable Story of what he did himself in virtue of a Piece of the Cross of Christ, it is so circumstanced, as to render the Fact of dubious Credit.

F

dit.

* Ecce ego jam Hipponensis Episcopus eram, & cum quibusdam servis Christi ad Æthiopiam perrexī, ut eis Sanctum Christi Evangelium prædicarem ; & VIDIMUS ibi multos homines ac mulieres capita non habentes, sed oculos grossos fixos in corpore.—VIDIMUS & in inferioribus partibus Æthiopiæ homines unum oculum tantum in fronte habentes. *August. ad Fratres in Eremo*, p. 135. Edit. Basil. 1569.

dit. *John*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, had sent him a little Bit of that sacred Wood; and *Paulinus* communicated to *Severus* a Piece of his Piece, that he had receiv'd from *Jerusalem*. With it *Paulinus* sent a large Account how the Cross was miraculously discovered, and assures him of that strange Property of that Wood; ^d “ cut off as many Pieces as you
 “ will of it, yet it never is lessened, but con-
 “ tinues the same, as if it never had been
 “ touched.” The thing here to be observed is, that Credit is not always given, even where there should seem to be the greatest Evidence of Testimony. *Paulinus* himself was not only an *Eye-witness*, but an *Actor*, in an Affair, of which he sends his Friend word.
 “ A Fire raging, and burning down a
 “ House, the People got *Water*, and pour'd
 “ it on the Flames, in hopes of quenching
 “ them : But, instead of succeeding by means
 “ of *Water*, the Fire burnt the fiercer for it.
 “ Upon this, *Paulinus* taking the precious
 “ Relique of the *Holy Cross*, he with That
 “ instantly put out the Fire.”

— — — — — *Omnem*
Vicerat Ignis aquam; nos Ligno extinximus Ignem.
Quamque Aqua non poterat, vicit brevis astula flam-
mam. Natal. 10.

His

^a Innumeris pœne quotidie hominum votis lignum suum commodans, detrimenta non sentiret, & quasi intacta permaneret. *Paulin. Epist. xi. ad Severum.*

His being not only an *Eye-witness*, but an *Agent*, in this Case, does not satisfy any one, that That little Piece of the Cross extinguished the Flames, that *Water* could not; but there remains upon the Mind some sort of *Doubt*; and few will assent to this Fact in the same manner as they do to *Paulinus's* being Bishop of *Nola*.

What is usually said in behalf of the Miracles done in the Ages of the Best Authority, since the Apostolic Times, is, that They are related by Men of Piety, of Abilities, and Integrity. Let this have all the Weight it deserves: But when a Fact is such, as we never saw, nor is it possible for any Man by his ordinary Powers to do, the common way of Reasoning is, first to try it by *Experience*; and if we find no Agreement to That, then to see for a Reason, or to make a Judgment upon Circumstances, from whence the *Probability* of such Miracle may appear. Let us therefore consider the general Rules, by which we determine the *Probability* of Facts,

1. If we perceive a thing *impossible* in its Nature, no Testimony, no Authority whatever is sufficient to make it be believed to be really done; and whatever it is that is done, will always be imputed to Art or Trick. When the People of *Egnatia* pretended, that they could at their Temple *burn* and consume *Incense without Fire*; it was easy to perceive a

Trick, tho' perhaps a Man might not be able to tell how it was performed.

—— ——— *Gnatia lymphis*
Iratis extructa dedit risusque Jocosque;
Dum flammâ sine thura liquescere limine sacro
Persuadere cupit. Credat Judæus Apella,
Non ego. ——— HORAT. Sat. v.

2. If a Thing be *possible*, and yet we find in Experience, that it never, or *seldom* happens; or that we ourselves, or others, have never, or scarce ever heard, or found it to happen, we give our Assent to Witnesses, who assert such a thing, with *great Difficulty*. There is no Impossibility in the nature of things, but that there may be found out what goes by the Name of the *Philosopher's Stone*: but yet as it may be questioned, whether ever any one has been able to discover this grand Secret; tho' it has been often pretended to (nay, there are those who tell us, *who* have been in Possession of it ever since its first Invention by *Adam*, down quite to the last Century) — as it may be questioned, I say, whether ever any one has been able to discover this grand Secret; no wise Man will readily give his Assent to any one, who pretends to have found it out. It is *possible*, that there may be a Lump of *Gold*, or a *Diamond*, as big as an House, or a Mountain; yet should any one assert, that he has *seen* such a Mass,

Mafs, he would not easily gain Credit to his Affertion.

3. If a Fact be extraordinary, and what does not come within the Verge of our Experience, or that of others, who are contemporary with us; yet if we are able to fee a *good Reason*, why fuch a *Fact* fhould be done, we may give good Credit to it. Or, if an extraordinary Fact has been done, of the Truth of which we are convinced; we may judge a *like Fact* to be *probable*, if a *like Reason* appears. But if a *like Fact* be reported, and a *like Reason* does not appear, then we may conclude the Fact to be *improbable*, and we ought not to give any Credit to it.

Thus, in order to prove himfelf to be *The Chrift*, our Saviour reftored Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame; and we fee a very good Reason for fuch extraordinary Facts, or for an immediate Interpofition of Providence on that account. But fhould a Relation be made now of fuch Miracles performed before any *Image*, or by any *Relique*, and no Reason appears, why fuch Miracle is performed; we may doubt, or refuse Credit to it, however it may be pretended to be attested.

4. It does not hence follow, that God never does interpofe in a Manner extraordinary, where we perhaps cannot fee the Reason of his Interpofition: But the *Probability* of his not interpofing in fuch manner is fuch, that the Credit of Witneffes must be able to counterbalance

terbalance the *Improbability* of such his Interposition, before we can assent to it.

These are general Rules of judging concerning the Credibility of *extraordinary* things that happen: for as to *common* Cases, we judge from what we find has happened within our own Experience, or that of others; and no great difficulty here occurs. But then we must form a Judgment about the Credibility of *Persons*, as well as *Things*, in order not to be deceived. And here,

A Witness of any Fact must have Opportunity of *examining* it: He must be *faithful* in relating it: He must not be biased by *Interest*, or *Party*: He must not be *credulous*: He must have Abilities to search out the Truth. Again; If a Man be an *Eye-witness* of any Fact, and has the Qualities just now mentioned, he deserves the *first* degree of Credit. If a Person *relates*, what an Eye-witness tells him, he has a *lesser* degree of Credit due to him. He still has a *lower* degree, who relates only what *They* say, to whom Eye-witnesses have made a Report. And as for those, who collect from others what they have said, and thus compile a History of Facts, their Credit depends upon their Judgment in rejecting, or relating, what has appeared to them to be True or False.

There is another Rule, of great Importance to form our Notions of *Credibility*; and that is, if *Enemies*, as well as *Friends*, con-

cur

cur in relating the same Fact. In this Case there arises a degree of *Probability*, which makes a Relation of any Fact very credible: For *Enemies* would certainly *deny*, (if they had any ground for Denial) whatever is reported to their Prejudice. If therefore an *Enemy* to the Gospel should admit the Facts related in the Gospel, or should attempt to account for them by *Magic Arts*, or by any other Solution—This would be a direct Testimony in behalf of such Facts, and ought to have the greatest Regard paid to it. The Testimony therefore of the *Fathers*, (to add this by the by) is not the *only* Support of the Credit of the *Evangelists*; but we have the *unanimous Consent* of the *Enemies* of the Gospel, as well as of its *Friends*. Supposing therefore that the *Fathers* could be proved to be *weak* and *injudicious* Men, as *credulous* in certain Points, as those who are no Friends to them, or to their Writings, would represent them; yet this is not sufficient to invalidate their Testimonies to the Scriptures, since the *Enemies* to the Gospels acknowledge, that they were wrote by the *Authors*, whose Names they bear, and acknowledge the *miraculous* Facts by their Attempts to *account* for them. But to this Point more will be said under the other Question to be considered hereafter.

The general Rules of Probability being thus laid down, must *all* of them, or *how many*, or *which* of them, be applied to make
an

an *extraordinary* Event appear credible? No doubt, if *many* of these Circumstances concur, the *Probability* may rise to such an Height, as to amount to Conviction. But if it should happen, that the Credibility of *Persons* should be to be weighed against the Credibility of *Things*, there may remain grounds for *Doubt*, and *Suspicion*; and Assent may be with-held without any just Charge of Scepticism.

Let us now suppose a Fact to be related, improbable in itself, because we have never found in our own Experience, or in that of others, any similar Instance; nor have ever heard or seen any Man able to do, what is said to be done: — A *Suspicion* presently arises, and lies against the Man who relates it, however *faithful* the Relator may be, and even *credible* in all other Instances. Nor will his Ability, or supposed *Honesty*, or his being even an *Eye-witness*, totally remove the *Jealousy* of Fraud, or Imposition, or Trick; because the *Improbability* of the *Thing* outweighs any Assurance that we can have of *Personal Qualities*. It is not therefore unusual for Men to be guilty of a double Mistake in arguing on this Head: They *first* consider only the Credibility of *Persons*; and if they find them *able* and *honest*, they do not consider the Incredibility of the *Thing*: And then, what is as usual, they reason from the Testimonies, *e. g.* of *Livy*, or *Tully*, or *Cæsar*,

far, in a pure *credible* Matter, to the Case of the Testimony of others, in Matters in their own nature *incredible*. What I mean is this: They argue, that we have *moral Evidence* for the Truth of the Facts related by *Livy* or *Cæsar*; and we believe them: And then they add, we have the same *moral Evidence* for the Facts related by *St. Matthew*, or *St. John*. But they seem not once to take it into their Thoughts, that every body makes a difference in the same Historian, betwixt what he relates as a *common, natural*, Fact, which is like to what we see, or hear frequently from others; and what is related as *miraculous*, to which we see nothing similar. Accordingly Men often reject, what is related of this kind, as *fabulous*, and *incredible*, how much deference soever they may pay to an Author in other Matters.

LIVY gives us an Account of the Irruption of the *Gauls* into *Italy* under *Brennus*, and of their taking and sacking *Rome*, and of their total Defeat by *Camillus*. He tells us too of *Hannibal's* surprizing March and Passage over the *Alps*, and his beating the *Romans* in several Engagements; and at last, how *Fabius*, by Delays and cautious Wariness, restored the *Roman* Affairs. No body calls in question the Truth of these several Facts. But whether or no, “^f before the *Gallic* War began, there
G “ was

^f Expiandæ etiam vocis nocturnæ, quæ nuntia cladis ante bellum Gallicum audita neglectaque, mentio illata. *Liv. l. x.*

“ was a *Voice heard in the Night*, that foretold
 “ the Destruction which the *Gauls* made,”
 may justly be *doubted*: nor will the Circum-
 stance of their building an Altar, or a Temple,
 to *Æ Aius Locutius* on that Occasion, verify
 the Truth of the Fact, that *Aius Locutius*
 spoke, or that any one heard such a Voice.
 And so when he mentions the Prodigies,
 which happened about *Hannibal's* Invasion of
Italy; or when he tells of a *Bullock's speak-*
ing, of its raining *Stones*, or *Blood* — These
 may be *suspected*, or *denied*, because they
 have no degree of Probability. If then it be
 asked, Why is *Livy* credited in one Part of
 his History; and in the other, whatever he
 says is *suspected*, or perhaps *rejected*? Or it is
 questioned, whether *all History*, by this
 means, is not rendered *dubious* or *uncertain*?
 Or how is it possible to distinguish Truth
 from Falshood? The Answer is, Consider the
 Nature of the thing told. What is *agreeable*
 to *Experience* you have no reason to reject,
 unless there appears some Mark of *Untruth*:
 but what is *contrary* to *Experience*, or where
 nothing similar occurs, which can make us
 think the Story to be *probable*, there we have
 no reason to admit such a Narration, unless
 there has been such Examination, as precludes
 all Doubt.

Thus,

Æ Aius ille loquens, quando eum nemo norat, aiebat, & lo-
 quebatur, & ex eo nomen invenit: posteaquam & sedem, &
 aram, & nomen invenit, obmutuit? *Cicer. de Divinat. l. 2.*

Thus, when a *Popish* Historian tells us an ordinary historical Fact, we acquiesce in, and assent to his Narration. But when the same Author asserts ever so strongly Miracles done by a *Relique*, or an *Image*, or a *Bone*, or a *Crucifix*; every Protestant instantly suspends his Assent; Doubts arise; and he feels himself not in the same State of Mind, as he is about the rest of his History. Whence does this arise, unless it be that we measure, or judge of the Truth or Falshood of such Facts, by comparing them with what we experience in ourselves, or others; and we determine from what we know to be the nature of things, being in the first place sure, that no Man can do what is beyond his Power to do; and no Effects can be produced without *sufficient* Cause; and we suspect, that no such Examination has been made, as such Cases may require or deserve.

It will be said, that when we speak of *Miracles*, we suppose an Interposition of *Providence*; and by that acknowledge a *Power sufficient* to bring about whatever is *possible*. It is true; here is *Power*: But we do not find this Power often exerted in miraculous Cases. And as it never is, that we know of, unless for Reasons equal to the Occasions, we have a Right to *doubt*, where-ever such extraordinary Interposition is pretended, if good Reason be not produced for it. It is true, that God *may* make use of what Instruments he

G 2 pleases:

pleases: and he *may* exert even an extraordinary Power for the Reformation of wicked Men, or the Conviction of Unbelievers, or the Confirmation of virtuous and good Men in the Faith: Nor are we to confine his providential Government of the World by our narrow Views or Capacities. But if we do not ever see a miraculous Interposition, we do not assent, because God *may* produce such; but we argue from the *Improbability* of the thing, as much outweighing the Credit of the Author; and we suspect the Truth of what is not critically enquired into.

A *Bullock*, e. g. is said by *Livy* to have *spoken*, a *Horse* by *Homer*, a *Ram* by *Apolonius Rhodius*; a *Dog*, an *Elephant*, *Rivers*, *Trees*, in other Authors—Instances of which are very numerous in the *Greek* and *Latin* Writers; and particularly mention is made of *Cows speaking*. The very learned *Bochart* has collected out of *Historians*, *Poets*, and *Mythologists*, a very great number of Instances of this kind; from whence he concludes, “^h That no one would say, that *all* these are *fiētitious*: It is plain therefore, says he, that in this respect the Devil has shewn himself the Ape of God.” No doubt but that any, or all these, may be resolved into a Power able to produce such Effect;

^h Nemo omnia hæc commentitia dixerit. Itaque hac in parte planum est Diabolum se præstitisse Dei Simiam. *Bochart. Hieroz. l. ii. c. 4.*

fect; and Forty of them, as well as One. But yet Few will be easily persuaded of the Truth of such Facts, however related by Authors of good Credit in other Cases: nor will many come into the Solution which *Bockart* has given, unless he could have pointed out which were *fictitious*, and which were the Produce of the *Devil's* Power. Plain as this seemed to that very able and truly learned and masterly Writer, yet no degree of *Probability* appears, that the *Devil*, in any of the Instances he has quoted, *imitated* God; and it seems more *likely*, that all those Instances, collected out of Heathen Authors, are mere *Fictions*, than owing to any Interpositions of that Evil Spirit. It is the *Incredibility* of the *Facts* themselves, not of the *Power* able to produce such Facts, which makes them be denied: and it will be time enough to enquire into the *Cause*, or *Author* of these Facts, when we are sure that there were such *Facts* done.

It may perhaps be suggested, as indeed it has been, That it is not necessary to believe every particular miraculous Story, which occurs either among the Ancients or Moderns. But then, if Miracles are uniformly related, as done in different Ages, and different Places; and This for a long Continuance; and Historians, and other good Men, concur in the Report of such Facts; what Credit is due to such a Concurrence of Attestations? Must we

we not look on such Witnesses as *Fools* or *Knaves*, *all* to concur without Contradiction, and acting as in *Concert* to propagate what is false? But let it be observed,

First, When it is thought right to give up *particular* miraculous Stories, some Test or other must be given, by which one may judge, which are the defensible ones, and which the indefensible. Are the *Popish* Miracles of any Century, since the *Sixth* or *Seventh*, to have Credit? If the Answer be in the Negative, I shall ask, Are *St. Martin's*? Are *Simeon Stylites's*? Are *Hilarion's*? Are *St. Antony's*? If These are not to be credited, tho' Historians concur without Contradiction in them; What is the Rule by which one can judge, which are to be credited, and which not? If it be *Age* alone that gives the Sanction, Care must be taken, lest any one taking a little and a little from it, should artfully take away the Authority of the whole:

————— *Caudæque Pilos ut Equinæ*
Paulatim vello, & demo unum, demo etiam unum,
Dum cadat————— HOR. Epist. l. 2. Ep. 1.

Secondly, Admitting it to be true, that Men concur in Attestations of miraculous Facts; yet it is hard to represent them *all* as *Fools* or *Knaves*, even supposing the Facts to be false. They may possibly have examined Witnesses, who have been positive and clear;
and

and they may have reported according to the Evidence before them. They may have entertained too good an Opinion of Those they credited ; or they may have taken for granted, what they did not examine, as is common enough in other Cases. Or, lastly, They may have acted upon Prejudices, and imagined a Continuance of real Powers, in opposition to the supposed Powers of Magic, or any such Illusion.

But whether one can account for the Conduct, or for particular Actions of Men, is not very material. Popish Miracles have been pretended in *every* Age ; in Variety of Places ; for many Centuries together before the Reformation : And since the Reformation, we have the Continuance of them related by a great many Authors. And tho' some particular ones have been discovered to be false, yet still others are reported by Men of Learning and Abilities ; and some are produced and insisted on as Standard ones, indisputable, worked constantly by Providence, in order to the Conversion of *Infidels* and *Heretics*. Call the Vouchers of These, if you please, *Fools* or *Knaves* : The *Concurrence of Attestations* continues to this Day ; and whatever fully accounts for this Concurrence now, may possibly help us to account for the like Concurrence in Times past.

Where-ever we can arrive at what we think Evidence about any thing's being done,
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we cannot but believe it to *Be*. Supposing one were to *see* a dead Man raised to Life, or a *sick* Man cured by a *Word*, or a *Lame* one by a *Touch*, one could not doubt of what one *saw*: and supposing it to be all an Imposture artfully carried on, yet one could not help believing it to be what it appeared to be, and accordingly it would be treated. But then there are infinite Cases, where we are wont to add Conjectures of our own to what we *think* we see; and we determine, as we think them most *likely*: and here we may easily mistake. We are too apt at all times to make hasty Inferences from narrow Views; and accordingly we impute to the *Devil*, to *Angels*, to *Saints*, to *Images*, to *Reliques*, certain Facts, the *Causes* of which we are utter Strangers too. This is plainly owing to our Ignorance, and to strong Imagination, imputing to a certain determinate Cause, what we have no Reason or Grounds for. The *Popish* Writers, (infinitely worse than *Heathens* in this respect) attest many Miracles, as done by a certain *Image*; and they name the Persons cured, the Place where the Cure was done, the Length of Time the Person had been afflicted, the Day when he was relieved from his Disorder, or totally cured; and they name every Circumstance so minutely, and with such Precision, that if one were to look no farther, one could not deny Assent to what they report. But whether these miraculous Cures,

Cures, supposing them done, are owing to a *Saint*, or an *Image*, to a *Relique*, or to any other particular assigned Cause, may be questioned. I do not mention such a credulous, superstitious silly Man, as was the famous *Lipsius*, notwithstanding all his Learning and great Abilities: But one may cite Authors of much better Reputation, who have testified at large, upon their own Knowledge, i^e “ Cures of Arms, the Use of which
 “ had been lost for a dozen Years through ill
 “ letting of Blood; Cures of *Hectic Fevers*
 “ of long Continuance; of Lameness of
 “ fourteen Years standing; of Falling Sick-
 “ ness, Rheumatisms, Loss of Sight of ma-
 “ ny Years Continuance, Fainting Fits,” and a Variety of other Disorders, removed by Prayers before certain *Images* of the Blessed Virgin; and therefore, as they say, done by them. The Truth of these miraculous Cures is largely attested by no less Persons than Bishops, Chancellors of *France*, and Men of the greatest Honour and Dignity in that Kingdom; and believed by them. Whence now is it, that no Protestant gives his Assent to these so *well attested* Stories? Or whence is it, that those who do believe them, (whatever the Ground or Reason of their Belief is founded on) impute such strange Effects to an Image? They argue *now*, just in the same manner as those of old did, who finding, up-
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ⁱ See L'Histoire de notre Dame du Paix.

on much digging, and removing of Rubbish, about the Place where our Saviour was said to be crucified, *Three Crosses*, which had lain buried there near *Three hundred Years*, and were not decayed; and not being able to tell, which was That on which Christ died, they presently discovered it by its imagined Virtue; for ^k “ when they laid a dead Carcass, first
 “ on one of them, and then on the other,
 “ Death despised the Power of the *Thieves*
 “ Crosses; but as soon as it was applied to
 “ our Lord’s Cross, a Resurrection instantly
 “ ensued, and the Body revived, and stood
 “ upright; those that were living Spectators
 “ trembling” at what happened. Such Facts as These should be allowed to be *examined* by *Enemies*, as well as *Friends*, and by that means freed from Doubt; for the mere Attestations of interested Parties are not sufficient to remove Suspicions, or to gain Credit to what is improbable in the nature of the thing.

I have already taken notice of that peculiar Property of *This Cross*, that “ tho’ it be cut
 “ often, and Pieces of it taken away by great
 “ Numbers of People, yet it grows again,
 “ and

^k Nec mora, verbum factum, cadaver illatum est, deponitur, jacenti una de Crucibus admovetur, & altera: sed reorum ligna mors sprevit. Postremo, Dominicam Crucem prodit Resurrectio, & ad salutaris ligni tactum morte profuga funus excussum, & corpus erectum est, tremefactisque viventibus stetit corpus. — Ita ut crucem Christi decuit, experimento resurrectionis inventa & probata Crux Christi est. *Paulin. Epist. xi. ad Severum.*

“ and is the *same Whole*, as if it had never
 “ been touched.” We should not endeavour to assign a *Cause* of this remarkable Effect, before we are sure of the *Fact*. And so it is in relation to the Cures, which are so strongly attested by zealous Catholics; the *Facts* themselves are to be ascertained, before we enquire who, or what, was the *Cause* of them. There is something in all these Cases, which makes one *doubt*, and *suspect*, and impute to *Credulity*, or *Interest*, or *private Views*, what is so extraordinary and uncommon. They, who contend for them, urge in their behalf, not only the Credibility of *Witnesses*, but that they are not unlike the Miracles recorded in Scripture, which all Parties admit. That if any of These, done before an Image of the Virgin, or at the Tomb of any Saint, are not *instantaneous* Cures, but took up some time to accomplish them; so did several of those that are related in the sacred Writings: That the same Power, which formerly wrought Miracles, still subsists, and ever will subsist: That the Power actually exerted by an *Image*, or a Piece of *Linnen*, or a *Bone*, is the Power of God exerted in what Manner, and by the Instrumentality of what Person or Thing, (how despicable or mean soever it may seem to them, who do not believe) he thinks fit to make use of: That these Facts are so fully *attested*, that a Man must be an absolute Sceptic to deny, or doubt of their

Truth. And, lastly, That the Scripture Miracles must be denied, if we refuse Assent to what is so amply *attested* by the best of Evidences.

It is true, that there is scarce any Miracle recorded in Scripture, which has not something *like* it told by even *Heathen* Writers, as well as *Popish* ones: And there have been Men of true and solid Learning, heartily disposed to do Credit to the Scriptures, who have made Collections of miraculous Facts; and have even run the Parallel betwixt the Sacred and Profane Authors, in order to explain them, or to shew their Consent. They had it in their Views to prove, that the extraordinary Facts mentioned in the Scriptures, were not more incredible than those asserted by *profane* Authors; and therefore, that the One should find easy Admission with Infidels, as well as the Other. For why is not a Miracle recorded by a *Jew*, as credible as one recorded by a *Heathen*?

But though this may be sufficient in certain Cases, and the End of some Arguments may be served by it; and tho' the modern Miracles may be *like* the scriptural ones in many Circumstances; yet That is by no means an Evidence of Truth. For Forgeries must be like Originals, or else they could never pass in the World. The material Point is, 1st, What Weight ought to be allowed to Testimony in Cases of miraculous Reports? And, 2dly, When

When Miracles are related by different Writers, *e. g.* by *Sulpitius Severus*, and by a *Sacred Writer*; why is the one defended, at the same time that the other is rejected? Why should not Both be condemned as fictitious, or Both be admitted as True Facts, since Both depend upon Evidence to us, *at this Distance*, well vouched by the best Human Authority? Accordingly the Papists plead the Force of Human Authority, and the nature of *Eye-sight* Witnesses, for the Miracles they relate. And indeed so do the People of the *Fifth*, and those of the *Sixth* Century; and all that have lived from those Days to the present Times have produced Vouchers, who would in *ordinary Cases* be deemed good Evidence. Why then is their Testimony, in Cases of Miracles, rejected without much Hesitation? Or will it not follow, that the Miracles, recorded in the Sacred Books, ought to be rejected as much, as other Miracles said to be worked by one body or other, since they depend upon the Authority of *Eye-sight* Witnesses?

This is not the Place to enter into this Point: And whether it be true, that the Miracles of the Gospel stand only upon the same Foundation that other Miracles do, will be shewn hereafter.

There is another Case, which must not be passed over in silence. We may easily suppose it possible to have a *Difference* in the Narration of the same Fact: That One may relate it so, as to make it all *miraculous*; and

Another may speak of it in such a manner, as not to imply *any Miracle* at all. Which Account then ought we to give the Preference to? Or what are we believe? Or how are we to assent? *E. g.* The Emperor *Justinian* tells us,¹ “ That he himself *saw* very venerable
 “ Men, who, having had their Tongues cut
 “ out by the Roots, *spoke* in a *miserable man-*
 “ *ner* what they had suffered.” *Victor Vi-*
tenfis, relating the same Fact, tells us,^m “ They
 “ spoke just as well as they spoke before” this Accident happened to them. And *Pro-*
copius assures us, that these Confessors were in Being at *Constantinople* in his Time, (that is, between 40 and 50 Years after they endured what they underwent) and ἐχρῶντο ἀκρα-
 φνεῖ τῇ φωνῇ, had “ *an articulate distinct Voice,*”
 “ nor felt any harm from this Affliction:”
 ἔδ’ ὁπωσίην ταύτης δὲ τῆς πικρίας ἐπα-
 δανόμηναι. *Procop. lib. i. cap. 8.* And so *Victor* observes of some other great Sufferers in *Africa*, thatⁿ “ they had no Scars or
 “ Bruises appearing in them, tho’ they were
 “ burnt with red hot Irons, tore with Hooks,
 “ and racked.” The Emperor is certainly a good Voucher for the *miserable Manner* in which those unhappy People spoke. But as
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¹ *Vidimus venerabiles viros, qui, abscissis radicitus linguis, pœnas suas miserabiliter loquebantur. Cod. l. i. Tit. 27.*

^m *Ita locuti sunt & loquuntur, quomodo ante loquebantur. Vict. Vitenfis, l. iii.*

ⁿ *Nulli livores, nulla pœnarum vestigia in eis penitus videbantur—laminis ignitis adusti—ungulis exarati—cruciatibus torti. Victor. ibid.*

he does not mention the *Articulateness* of their speaking, he seems to be a much more credible Witness, than those who tell us of the *Distinctness of the Speech* of these Confessors. For that was such a Circumstance, that he could not but have taken notice of it, had he *seen* or *heard* such Objects speaking in such a manner. When therefore we are sent from *Africa*° to *Constantinople*, as we are by *Victor Vitenfis*, for the Truth of this miraculous speaking; and we find the Emperor attesting upon his *Eye-sight*, that these Confessors only *spoke miserably*, or in a *miserable manner*; it is more probable that *his* Testimony is true, than is that of others, who say that they spoke *articulately*. For in two different Relations of the same Fact, Probability will always be on the Side of Reason and Experience, rather than on the side of Miracle.

I am not insensible, that to reconcile the Emperor and others, some are willing to change the word *miserabiliter* into *mirabiliter*: and then indeed *Justinian* and *Procopius*, &c. will perfectly agree. But in all the Editions I have seen of the *Code*, (except that of *Russardus*) the constant Reading is, *miserabiliter*; and whence *Russardus* had the other Word, or whether it was his own Correction put by him into the Margin, I know not.

° Sed si quis incredulus esse voluerit, pergat nunc Constantinopolim, & ibi reperiet unum de illis, subdiaconum Reparatum, sermones politos sine ulla offensione loquentem.

not. It is certain, that *Gothofred* takes no notice of any such various Reading. But to return.

I grant, that Human Authority is, in some Cases, deemed of that Validity, as to be indisputable. And as such, *Calculations* have been made, and its Credibility *computed*; and moral Certainty, as well when at its Height, as when incomplete, hath been reduced to *Numbers*. It must be owned to have been ingenious and amusing enough to make such *Calculations*; and if one takes for granted the *Data*, upon which the Computation is founded, there is a sort of Proportion, which cannot be denied. But the Evil is, that a Man is never the more knowing in the real Nature of *Human Testimony* by such Computations, whatever he may be in *Numbers*; because, if the degrees of Probability are either not known, or are equal to nothing, or are not in the Proportions given; all Reasoning grounded upon uncertain Principles must be of no use, and must leave a Man in as great Uncertainty as ever. Now I apprehend, that it is not in any one's Power so with Certainty to fix Human Testimony, as to be sure of its *Equality* to a given *Number*, or to make the one exactly equal to the other. And in course you cannot tell the exact Proportions of *Co-attestations*, unless you previously *suppose*, what may, or may not be true, the exact Ratio of Testimony to Number. But let us suppose, that
this

this may be done in *common* Cases; yet what is the Ratio to a fixed Number, when Calculations are applied to what is *incredible*, or at best *improbable*, as not founded on any Experience? Should one instance in *Procopius*, who tells us, That the Men, whose Tongues were cut out by the Roots in *Hunneric's* Reign, spoke *distinctly* and *articulately* — What is *his* Testimony to be reckoned as equal to? Is it to the Number *One*, or $\frac{1}{2}$, or $\frac{1}{4}$, or to any Number bigger or lesser than what I have named? All Miracles are Acts of extraordinary Power; and every Man that relates them, relates what not one Man in many Millions ever *saw*; and what has never happened, so far as appears, in many hundreds of Years: And when, I say, not one Man in many Millions, I might have said, a great many more, and have been within the Truth. The Rarity of all such Events has been, or easily *may* be, the reason of counterfeiting, imposing, cheating, deluding. Now, what Computation of Testimony is applicable, or possible in such Cases? Or can any one suppose such very *precarious Probability* equal to a certain *fixt* Number? Or if Men will suppose it, will any practical Knowledge arise from it? Certainly, none.

Let us now admit, that the *Popish* Miracles are similar in many Instances to those of the Scriptures; that a great many too of the *Heathen* Wonders are like, and may be compared

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with

with those recorded in the Bible—still, I say, the Grounds, upon which they stand, are not the same. Human Testimony itself, when it concerns common *ordinary* Cases, and when it relates to *miraculous* ones, is not equally readily admitted as Truth. Every one feels a difference, when an Author gives an Account of a common Historical Fact, and when he tells us, that a *Cow spoke, and said, p Rome, beware of thyself.*

What that Difference is, may appear plain enough from what has been said. Only it may be proper to observe, that even *extraordinary* Events, brought about by Providence in an *ordinary* Way, are not liable to *Doubts* and *Suspensions*, as those Acts are, that are above the Power of ordinary Human Agency. That a King should go on and conquer, and over-run almost the known World, as *Alexander* did, is a surprising Event, and what has not happened perhaps above *Once* in Two Thousand Years. And yet, because we can easily conceive how this *might* happen, no one doubts of the Fact, or of the Veracity of the Historians who relate it. So that the mere *Unusualness* of a Fact, if it be agreeable to the Laws of Nature, and what we conceive possible, is no Objection to its Truth, or to the Credibility of the Relators. But if it be a thing *preternatural*, and what we know to be *beyond* the Power of Man to do, we then

p Roma, cave tibi. *Livy.*

then have a Right not to trust to bare *common* Evidence, but may require something more to render it *credible*.

Thus have I considered the First Point, *viz.* What are the Grounds upon which the Credibility of Miracles, in general, is founded: And have shewn, that Human Testimony, how much soever it is valued in *common* Cases, has not an equal deference paid to it in *miraculous* ones. What then, you will say, must become of the Miracles of Christ, and his Apostles? Or have we any thing more or better, than the Testimonies of *Eye-witnesses* for Them? Or, what are the Grounds which render *Them* credible? This is the Subject of the next Enquiry, and deserves a particular Attention.

QUESTION II.

Upon what Grounds the Miracles of the Gospel in particular are credible?

IT appears, by what has been said, that in order to make the Evidence for any Fact *in general* credible, there must not only be the *Relator* worthy of Credit, but the *Thing*, that he relates, must be credible. If a *Person* be a Man of the greatest Abilities, and of Integrity indisputable; yet if the *Thing* reported be in

its own nature *incredible*, either because it is impossible in itself, or because it is confirmed by no Experience of our own, or of that of others; it is in course either liable to be suspected, or perhaps to be entirely rejected. Upon what Foundation then does the Credit of our Saviour's Miracles stand; since They are improbable in their own Nature, as being Facts beyond the Power of any Mortal to do, and are similar to nothing that our common Experience teaches us? This was the Subject, which I principally had in View.

The Works, which our Saviour did, were such, as he himself appeals to, as *bearing Witness* of him. It was very usual with him, on proper Occasions, to exert a Power, which no Man else, except such as he, directly or indirectly, gave that particular Power to, could exert. He healed the Sick, and gave Sight to the Blind, and Strength to the Lame, and cured all Sorts of Infirmities and Disorders by a *Word*, by a *Touch*, by Means that had no appearing Relation to the End; and he never failed of the Success he proposed. Nor was it only the Sick and the Lame that were cured by him, in such an extraordinary manner; but he exerted the like Power on all Occasions, on every Subject, whenever or where-ever it pleased him to manifest it. Nor was it confined to miserable Objects alone, but the Winds and the Waters, the Dead, as well as the Living, obeyed his Voice. Of these,

these, and such like miraculous Instances, are the Four Gospels full.

That the Works of our Saviour were real miraculous Operations is evident. For tho' there are such things as lucky Incidents in Life, which no Man can account for; tho' it may happen, that Events may fall out just as a Word is spoken; or that Storms may cease, or that a sick Man may grow well, or at least better, suddenly; and that a Recovery may be no more owing to the Word spoken, than to the striking of a Clock at that Instant when the Word was spoken: Tho' surprising things have been accomplished by what is beyond our Hopes, or Conceptions, and therefore is usually called *Chance*: And, lastly, tho' it is possible to work upon the Imagination a sort of Enthusiasm, which may produce strange Effects; Yet no Chance, no Imagination, no lucky Coincidence of any kind, ever brought a Dead Man to Life, tho' they may have produced the contrary Effects, and have struck a Living Man with Death: And much less could These, or any of them, make a Dead Man revive just at a given Time, or fill Thousands of People that were hungry, and make the Fragments, that were left, to be more than the Loaves and Fishes they first sat down to.

Every Effect must have a sufficient Cause; and where-ever any thing is done above the natural Powers of any Efficient, we must recur

cur to a supernatural Efficiency. We know it not to be in the Power of Man to walk on the Surface of the Water without sinking ; or should he bid another walk on the Water, he could not by a Word secure him from sinking. We know it not to be in human Power to raise a Dead Man to Life, or to cure a Sick Man at a distance, by only saying that *He liveth*. We must therefore recur to some Cause, that is equal to such Effects ; or to some Power superior to That of Man, which is able to produce such Works. Now since such Facts are said to be done by our Saviour, and Others empowered by Him, this Power must be derived from some Being superior to Man.

But before I proceed to shew, that the Miracles of the Gospel are *credible* in themselves, it will be proper to enquire, what Evidence they afford of the *Truth* of our Saviour's being the Christ. And the Reason of this is, That Miracles, considered as such, are no Proof of any thing, but of *extraordinary Power* ; or that the Person, who does them, is assisted by some Being superior to Man. But *Power* does not imply *Truth* ; nor does it follow, that he who can exert the greatest Strength, will therefore exert the greatest Veracity. How therefore does that follow, which our Saviour says of Himself, *The same Works*

^a John iv. 51.

Works *that I do*, BEAR WITNESS *of me*,
that the Father hath sent me?

To shew this Consequence, I must observe, that the Case of our Saviour was the Case of one foretold, and in a very remarkable Manner described, and of whom many Particulars had been mentioned in the Prophets, from the Days of *Moses* to those of *Malachi*. All these were to agree in the Person of The Christ; and were as Tests, by which he might be known with Certainty whenever he should appear. They were the Criteria by which he might be known; and without which no one could assume that Title. There was then to be a Concurrence of ALL these in any Person, who should claim to be The Christ; and such Concurrence would manifest him to be what he pretended to be. But as a *Part* only of them were fulfilled in our Saviour during his Life, and some were to be fulfilled *in* his Death, and several more *after* his Death, and his Death being that necessary Link in the Chain by which all was held together; — hence it was that He appealed to his *Works*, in Evidence that his Father had sent him: And hence it was, that after his Resurrection he said to his Disciples — *O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his Glory?* Luke xxiv. 25, 26. Acts xvii. 3. xxvi. 23. As if he had said — Was not *Death* and
Suffer-

Sufferings the only Means, by which all that is said in the Prophets is to be reconciled, and made consistent? Can all the Characters of the Messiah be made to agree to any One Person, unless he goes thro' *Death*, as I have done? Accordingly our Saviour *opened their Understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved The Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the Third day. Luke xxiv. 36. Vid. Acts, &c.* Some Marks then of the Messiah were fulfilled in him; such were the *Time* of his Coming, whilst the Tribe of *Judah* continued, his Descent of the Tribe of *Judah*, the Expiration of *Daniel's* Weeks, his being of the House of *David*, his being a *Man of Sorrows*, &c. But the fulfilling of *some* of the Characters only not being a *full* Proof of his being what he pretended to be, what could an honest, fair Expectant do in the midst of so much Uncertainty? How could he actually assent to the Truth of *Jesus's* being the Christ, when several Marks of *The Christ* were not accomplished in Him?

Our Saviour plainly saw this Difficulty; and knew that there might be Objections raised against him, as not having at that time several of the Predictions concerning the *Messiah* verified in him. He was not yet, whilst he was preaching the Kingdom of God, *cut off*, nor even *brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter*.

ter. Much less did he appear in that Character of *sitting upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom to order it, and to establish it, with Judgment and Justice.* The Government was not upon his Shoulder, nor did he appear as reigning over the House of Jacob for ever, or as having a Kingdom, of which there was to be no End. There were many other particular Prophecies unaccomplished, and especially what related to the *Call and coming in of the Gentiles*; the casting off of the *Jews*, and the Destruction of their State. And therefore our Lord justly said, *Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.* Luke xii. 10. There would, when the *Holy Ghost* was given, appear so many Marks of the Messiah accomplished, and the Key, which would open all the seeming Inconsistences of the *Messiah's* Character, would then be so plain, that it would be no longer excusable to speak against the Person of our Lord; but it must be Perverseness, and affected Obstinacy, or Ignorance, not to come into a Belief of his being *The Christ*.

Let us now suppose a Person to be described under *Twenty* Marks or Characters, which *all* concurring in any one Man, would make him known with the utmost Certainty. Suppose too, that when He is first seen, he answers not to above *Ten* or a *Dozen* of them;

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and that in Time he possibly may answer to the rest. During this Appearance, he declares himself to be the Person described, and exerts very frequently a *supernatural Power* in Vindication of his Claim; and likewise tells, (tho' not openly, that all might understand him, but) privately to his Followers, how the Characters, not at present visible in him, would be apparent to all. — Do not the miraculous Works done by such a Person *bear Witness* to him? Or what Evidence can be stronger for the *Truth* of his Assertion, than That which he thus produced? Or say, that Ten or Twelve Men, to whom the Meaning of the Scriptures had been explained, and the Consistency of many Prophecies (plainly contrariant to one another, if not seemingly contradictory) had been made apparent. — If such a Number of Men, thus instructed, were to work frequent Miracles, in proof that the Person described by so many Marks was actually come; and were to shew, that all of them did in fact agree to Him, and that his Death and Resurrection was the very Means by which all that was said in the Law and the Prophets might be reconciled — Would not such Miracles be Evidences of the *Truth* of such Testimony?

Be it so then, that Miracles, in general, are no Arguments of any thing but *Power*; yet when any particular Miracle is applied in Attestation of a Person, to whom *many* Characters

acters belonged, and in whom *some* were already fulfilled, and others would in due course of Time be fulfilled; the Miracle proves the *Attestation* of some Being, superior to Man, to the Truth of the thing asserted. The miraculous Interposition has the additional Force of *Supernatural Authority* recommending and pressing the verbal Testimony of him, who does the Miracle. Or supposing the Revelation to be of some future Event, or of any Fact not discoverable by any human Means, the Probability of its Truth rises proportionably to the supposed Knowledge of the Revealer, manifesting himself by such external Sign. For it seems natural to conclude, that Beings superior to Man have greater and more extensive Views, and more enlarged Capacities; and may see much further into Futurity, and in course may know more than we do: And if they prove by extraordinary Evidence, that they are *present* to, and *co-operate* with any Man, the Probability will always be, that they declare the Truth.

Apply this Reasoning to the Works of Christ, which carried plain and evident Marks of a Supernatural Power. They were Arguments to prove, that He was *The Christ*, tho' He had not yet fulfilled all that the Prophets had said about him: and They were Proofs that his Father had sent him. Under these Circumstances, He delivered a Doctrine tending to improve Mankind in Virtue and Good-

ness; and he discovered many things in relation to God's Schemes of governing the World; *his Judging Mankind*, and his *having all Power committed* to him, and his *having made all things*; and many other Points, which no Powers of Reason could possibly discover. It is certain, that the Doctrines he taught were worthy of all Acceptation; fit to be practised; enlightening the Mind; bringing the most important Notions to the Light; asserting the first Principles of all Religion; and shewing a consistent Scene of Providence thro' this Life to another in Eternity. Now the Miracles were done to prove himself *The Messiah*; and the Prophets had declared, that God *would put his Words into his Mouth, and that He should speak unto [his Brethren] all that God should command him.* And it shall come to pass, that *whosoever will not hearken unto my Words, which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him.* Deut. xviii. 18, 19. Consider then the Doctrines of our Saviour, and it is just matter of Praise, and Admiration, and Thankfulness, that the Great God and Father of all should condescend to impart this Knowledge of his Ways to Mankind, in order to lead them to Futurity, and to inform them how they might be happy; and should *previously* lay an Obligation on them to *hearken* to Him whom He should *send*, and prove to be *The Christ*.

Hitherto

Hitherto I have taken it for granted, that the Miracles, said to be done by our Saviour, were really done as they are related. But are They not as *incredible in themselves*, as any other Miracles related in History? Or why should any one give Credit to These, more than to any of Those, which are mentioned as done by *Heathen* Writers? Or are they not justly liable to the same Exceptions, as the Fictions pretended to be done by *Apollonius*, or the Fables of the *Popish* Legends? We say, and it is true, that human Authority has its proper Weight; but then it is liable to Mistakes and Misrepresentations, to Ambiguities, and to all the Infirmities of our Constitutions; and the Water is not the clearer, but, on the contrary, the more foul, the further it goes from the Fountain-head. And when *Miracles* are the Subjects of any Authority, there is always something unusual, something beyond the Power of Man, related; and consequently such extraordinary Facts always create Suspicions, and Jealousies, and Doubts, which are not easily removed. The Miracles attested by the Best *Heathen* Writers are not much credited by any body; nay, they are generally rejected as false: And none of the *Popish* ones are admitted as real, except by those, whom Interest, or Party, has made over credulous, or blind. It must be added, that there are Hundreds of Miracles related, and most solemnly attested: Appeals
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are made to Heaven for the Truth of the Facts; and the Men that do them, as well as the Relators of them, are said to be Holy, Just, Good, Exemplary in their Lives, and zealous for the Glory of God. And yet the Things done are such, that no one can pay any Credit to them. They seem to be rather the frantic Follies of Madmen, in many Instances, than the Actions of any serious reasonable Creatures: And yet they come so much recommended, and so well attested, that their Truth (if Authority or Testimony, in such Cases, is to be regarded) can scarce be questioned. Must these then be all admitted, because they are *well vouched*? Or must they be all rejected, because they are *incredible* in themselves, notwithstanding they are *well attested*, and have the solemnest Appeals to God in behalf of their Truth? Or is there any Medium, by which we may distinguish between such as ought to be received, and such as ought to be rejected?

In Answer to this I must observe,
 I. As Miracles may possibly be done by the Interposition of some Being superior to Man, so it must be owned, that They *may* be faithfully related, exactly as the Event was: And whenever they are faithfully related, they become as much the proper Objects of Belief, as any other historical Facts whatever. The Power of our Saviour, or of his Apostles, in virtue of supernatural Assurances, to cure a
Sick,

Sick, or a *Lame* Man, or to raise a *Dead* one, implies no Contradiction, nor is it an impossible Conception ; and therefore such a Power *may* possibly be exerted : And the Testimony of an *Eye-witness may be* faithfully set down in Words ; and what convinc'd a Spectator of the Truth of any extraordinary Fact, *may be* worthy of Credit. Suppose then the Relator to be no ways credulous ; to be faithful ; to be a Man of Judgment and Integrity ; to be not weak and superstitious ; not to have any other Interest to serve, but that of Right and Truth — Such Testimony *may be* credible in matter of *Miracle*, as well as in common Cases. For Miracles, how much soever above the Power of Man, are not above the Powers of Beings superior to Man ; and therefore *may be* done by such Interposition.

Be a Thing ever so surprizing, or unaccountable ; yet if it be *seen* done, and the Person that *sees* it, is *able* and *honest*, it will naturally have *great* Weight ; and Circumstances may be such, as to counterbalance the *Incredibility* of the Thing. But then, if the *Incredibility* of the Thing can be any ways removed, then the *Credibility* of the Person may be such, as to make his Relation of any Fact *credible*.

Let us suppose the Miracles of our Saviour to be Facts, as incredible in themselves, as other Miracles are ; yet if such Circumstances
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can be shewn in favour of his Miracles, as will shew a *Credibility* of a *supernatural Interposition*, in order to produce them; then the *Credibility* of the Person's relating them will give them actual Credit. Now, that our Saviour and his Apostles were under the Influence of a *Supernatural Assistance* will appear hereafter. Here I am only to shew the *Credibility* of the Persons, who have given us the History of his miraculous Actions. St. *John* gives us an Account of not only what he had heard, but of that which he had seen with his Eyes, which he had looked upon, and his Hands had handled of the Word of Life. 1 Ep. i. 1. St. *Matthew* was called to be an immediate Follower of Christ, and he arose, and followed him. *Matth.* ix. 9. He has mentioned a great many Instances of Miracles done by Christ, and some of that sort, that great Numbers of Witnesses could with ease have contradicted him, had he published any notorious Falshood. Thus when our Lord filled Five thousand Men, besides Women and Children, with Five Loaves and Two Fishes, and they did all eat, and were filled, and they took up the Fragments that remained, twelve Baskets full. *Matt.* xiv. 17—21. *John* vi. 9—13. Or when, at another time, he took Seven Loaves, and a few little Fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his Disciples, and his Disciples to the Multitude, and Four thousand Men, besides Women and Children,

Children, *did all eat, and were filled.* Matth. xv. 36—38.—Not only the Disciples of Christ, but great Numbers were *Eye-witnesses*, and must be sure of a Fact done in their *Sight*, and of which every particular Person there present received an immediate Advantage. The manner *How* this strange Increase was made is not here the Point ; but it is the *Fact* that *Eye-witnesses* were capable of attesting ; and if such *Fact* was done, these Persons were capable of declaring what they *saw* and *felt*.

And so it is in all the Instances, or almost all, that are recorded in the New Testament. They were such as were done *openly* ; and the Appeal lay to every one's *Senses*. If our Saviour *spoke the Word* only, and the Centurion's Servant was healed, *at a distance*, knowing nothing of what our Lord did, or would do ; Matth. viii. 8. if a Leper came and said — *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean ; and Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, Be thou clean ; and immediately his Leprosy was cleansed ; Ibid. ver. 1.* if he *cast out Spirits with his Word, and healed all that were sick* ; if no Distemper was so violent, but he could cure it with a *Word* ; if Life itself was restored when lost, by a *Touch*, by a *Command* — Every body that *saw* what was done was a proper Witness, and could attest the Truth of what his *Senses* taught him.

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Here then the Objection, if any, must lie, not against the *Witnesses*, who are Persons of Credit, who *saw* and examined what they reported, and were not imposed on ; but it must be against the *Miracle* itself, as a thing *incredible* in its own Nature. For the Historians themselves have all those Qualities, which are requisite to make them believed, Faithfulness, Abilities, Resolution to speak the Truth, and a Detestation of Falshood, and were Eyewitnesses of what they relate. If indeed the Miracles related are ridiculous themselves, or have no End, or a bad one, they may justly be rejected, let the Historian be otherwise ever so able and judicious ; because in such Cases no Arguments can be brought, which will remove the Difficulty arising from the *Incredibility* of the thing itself.

2. It must be owned, that God may at any Time, or in any Place, interpose ; and, if he thinks fit, he may cure Diseases, heal the Sick, or restore Eyes to the Blind, or Feet to the Lame, or relieve any distressed Person, and restore him to his Health, with or without any visible Means : And such Cases as these may be faithfully related, and the Facts may claim Belief, if really done. But these Cases being *possible* only, and not confirmed much by any Experience, other People have a Right to suspect, or doubt of the Truth, how much soever the Party relieved may have reason to be thankful for the Benefit received.

ceived. If the Credibility of the Relator outweighs the Improbability of such extraordinary Interposition, the Fact will be admitted; but if the Reverse happens, it will be rejected.

But let a divine Interposition be admitted; artful or ignorant People may annex *Consequences*, which they imagine to follow from such extraordinary Interpositions, which may safely be denied, tho' the *Fact* be acknowledged. A *Papist*, e. g. sees a miraculous Cure performed among the People of his Communion: yet when he infers this *Consequence*, — That therefore the *Roman Catholic Church* is the *One true Church* of Christ, and all who separate themselves from that Communion are guilty of *Heresy* or *Schism*, or are in a damnable Error—they conclude without any Premises. For God may cure as he thinks fit, and for Reasons which he thinks fit; and if He does not declare the Reasons of his Interposition, it is very easy for us to mistake them. Were he to declare, that his Interposition was for such a particular End; and a Man were convinced of the Truth of such a *Fact*; that Inference would be little questioned. But if a Person be cured at the Shrine or Tomb of any Saint, or before a Crucifix, or the Image of the Virgin *Mary*, or by the Touch of any *Relique*, neither the *Saint*, nor the *Image*, nor the *Relique* declare, that the Cure was effected by them: And if other

People pretend to *declare*, by whom, or by what, the Cure is done, the Question will be, How they come to know it, and How they came to know the *Consequence* they draw? Such Inferences are the Mistakes, or the Delusions of interested or artful People, who are ready to impose upon, and make a Gain of ignorant Devotees; and by various Frauds and Lies to increase a Party, and promote a Faction in Religion. The Cure may be as unquestionable, as they would represent it; yet when all is done *in Silence*, and no *Declaration* is made by Him or Her that is pretended to do the Miracle, nor no Sign is given one way or other, the Fact may be allowed if sufficiently proved, at the same time the particular Being that does the Fact may be as much *unknown*, as if it never had been done; and the *End* too for which it was done, (if it was any thing different from the mere Cure of the distressed Person) may be as unknown, as the Being that did it. * “ He
 “ must be a Man of extraordinary Skill in-
 “ deed, who understands what *Silence* means,”
 as *Cicero* on another Occasion observes.

3. The *End* of a Miracle may be *good*, i. e. it may be conceived to answer a *good Purpose*; but yet this is not always sufficient to make it *credible*. It is certainly true, that a visible *good End* is a much more probable ground of Belief

* Peritum autem esse necesse est eum, qui quid sit *Silentium* intelligat. *Cic. de Divin. l. 2.*

Belief that a Miracle was really done, than the Ends which the idle and romantic Writers of Miracles usually abound in. But even here it is *hard* for us to say, (if it be *possible* at all) to how many, or to what Degree, *Good* must be extended, in order to the Belief of a Miracle. Will a Good done to a *single* Person, be sufficient to make one give Credit to the Report? A *s Vestal* Virgin, accused of *Incontinency*, to shew her Chastity, is enabled to carry *Water in a Sieve*: Another, to vindicate her Character, is empowered to draw a Ship against the Stream with only her Girdle. Is the Vindication of *Innocency* in such Persons a sufficient Good to authorise, or give Credit to such miraculous Accounts? No; such Miracles done among the *Heathen* are not

^s Extat Tuciae Vestalis incestae precatio, qua usa aquam tulit in Cribro, anno Urbis Romae, 609. *Plin. Nat. Hist.* l. 31. c. 2. *Dionysius Halicarnassensis's* Account is more to our Point. He had been telling a Miracle done by *Æmilia* upon her Prayer to *Vesta*; and then goes on, "But there
 " was something yet more wonderful, and more like to a
 " Fable, which I am going to relate. They say, that some-
 " body accused one of the Holy Virgins, *Tucia* by Name,
 " not indeed with letting the Fire go out, but with other
 " *probable* Charges, tho' *false*. When the Virgin was or-
 " dered to make her Defence, she only said, that by *her*
 " *Works* she would wipe off the false Accusation. As soon
 " as she had said this, and had invoked the Goddess to be
 " her Conductor, she went to the *Tiber*, the Pontiff grant-
 " ing her Leave, and the People following her thro' the
 " City. When she came near the River, she ventured up-
 " on a bold Action, which is reckoned among the Principal
 " of *Impossibilities*. She took in an empty Sieve Water out
 " of the River, and carried it as far as to the *Forum*, and
 " there poured it out at the Priest's Feet." *Dionys. Halicar.*
 l. 2.

not credited. Is the granting Health to the Sick, and Strength to the Weak and Lame, or the Removal of some grievous Distemper, an End sufficient to give Credit to a Miracle done for such Purposes? We refuse Assent to a thousand Stories of this sort, which *Popish* Writers are constantly relating. How great then must the *Good* be, or how *extensive*, to make a Miracle be believed? But,

4. It has been suggested by Learned Men, that as the Miracles done by Christ, and the Apostles, were done in Confirmation of the Truth of the Christian Religion; so the Miracles done *since* those Times were done for the *same End*. They were done to *confirm the Truths* of the *Gospel*; and since they were done to promote the *same End* as the Miracles of Christ were, and they are related by *Eye-witnesses*, or by Men of Abilities, and exact Enquirers into their Truth, they are all equally to be believed.

It must be owned, that if it were proved to any one's Satisfaction, that the Miracles done by the *Saints* (of which we have good Store, enough to satiate any Reader) were done to *confirm* the *Old Religion*, they ought to be equally credited with those of the *Gospel*. For Facts of the same sort, done for the same End, are equally credible. But supposing the Facts to be done, a Question will arise, How do we know that they were done for the *same End*? Does it appear, that
St. Mar-

St. *Martin*, or *Macarius*, or any other Saint, ever *declared* that This was the *End* of their Miracles? Among the numerous Miracles reported to be done, we are told of certain Facts; (e. g. the turning of a *Maggot* into a *precious Jewel* by *Simeon Stylites*; or when a Woman appeared like a *Mare* to the Spectators, *Macarius* made her appear like a *real Woman* by pouring holy Water on her Head) but rarely, if ever, is it said, that such Acts are done in Confirmation of the Religion of Christ. The Miracles related are commonly bare Facts; they are surprising Cures; or something extraordinary done by Exorcisms, by Holy Water, or consecrated Oil; strange Preservations from Flames, all around burning but not hurting; casting out Devils, &c. But *why*, or for *what End*, all this is done, there is generally a profound Silence. Supposing that God were now to work a Miracle, and not to declare for what End He did it, are we to infer that He did it to *confirm the Old Religion*? Or might he not design any more than a Manifestation of Himself to a careless inconsiderate People? Or may He not do good to any Person without comprehending, or taking in, at the same time, the Confirmation of the *Gospel of Christ*?

It was not in this manner that our Saviour proceeded. He declared himself to be *THE Son of Man* foretold, and sometimes expressly called himself *THE CHRIST*; and He ap-
pealed

pealed to the Works he did in his Father's Name, as *bearing Witness* of him. *The Works*, says he, *which I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witness of me. Many good Works have I shewed you from my Father. — If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not : But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.* John x. 25, 32, 37, 38. There was no Occasion, or Necessity, that he should, upon working every Miracle he did, *expressly declare* for what End he did it. He was *foretold* and *described* by a great many *Characters*; and he declared, that he was the Person so *described*; and his wonderful Works would make all that expected that he would redeem *Israel*, examine into his Pretensions, by comparing Him and his Actions with what the Prophets had said: Whereas the Miracles done in After-times are, generally speaking, but *mere Facts*, upon which nothing depends; and what may relate to any thing else, as well as to Christ, or his Religion: At least this is true of the greatest Part of them, which seem to be Exertions of mere Power without any End or Purpose.

I would not by this seem to intimate, that an extraordinary Power may not be exerted by God upon particular Occasions, or to serve a particular Purpose. All that I would be understood to mean is, that the Miracles said to be

be done by the Ancients or Moderns, do not seem to be done in Confirmation of the *Old Religion* of Christ: But may as well be for any other End as That, since no End is at all declared. And it might as properly be said, that every Miracle worked by any Prophet, or other *Jew*, was to confirm the *Law* of *Moses*, as that every Miracle worked since the Days of our Saviour was to confirm the *Old Religion* of Christ. But,

5. As we abound with Relations of Miracles done in all Parts of the World by Men renowned for their Sanctity; and it is undoubtedly true, that many Miracles have been imposed upon the World, which upon Examination have been found to be false; and even False ones have been related as true by Men of Probity, and sometimes they seem to have been told with pious Designs to do good, and sometimes with worse Views; and all Miracles have, at the first View, the Marks of Improbability — Is there any Test by which we may judge of the Miracles done by our Lord and his Disciples, and know that They were really done? Or can we point out any Difference betwixt Them and Those that have been done, or are pretended to have been done, *since those Times*, so as to make the One more credible than the Other? Or, in short, How may we fairly point out the Difference betwixt what we are to believe, and what we are to reject?

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It must be allowed, that the *Attestation* given to many Miracles (even to Those which are certainly to be rejected) is such, that it is not an easy matter, in many Cases, to call their Evidence in question, if we regard the Credibility only of the Relator. But then, on the other hand, such Facts are so improbable in themselves, and such is the Credulity of many honest well-meaning Men, that one cannot but doubt and suspect the Stories one reads, let them be vouched almost ever so strongly. But in the Case of Christ and his Apostles we can arrive at a degree of *Certainty*, that They were endued with *Power from on High*. It is not therefore *incredible*, or *improbable*, that they should work Miracles, or that what is related of their Acts should be true; since *we ourselves* can be certain that *they* had *supernatural* Assurances. This is what we cannot have full *Assurance* of in *others*; and therefore the Attestations of things incredible in themselves are justly to be *doubted*; and the Assurances pretended may be denied; nor do they usually afford sufficient Evidence to others, be they e're so true. But in the particular Case of our Saviour and his Apostles, we can argue from an *apparent well known Interposition* of a superior Power in *one* Instance, to a *credible Interposition* of a superior Power in *another*.

But before I explain this more at large, I must previously add, That the Argument for the Truth or Credibility of the Miracles of
Christ

Christ and the Apostles, not only has all the Advantages which the Argument for any other Historical Fact has ; but has likewise an additional Strength, which almost all other past Facts are deficient in.

First, They have the Attestation of Men of Probity and Integrity, that many Facts were done by them, which were superior to any Powers of Men. Not only *Jesus* of *Nareth* did truly many Signs in the Presence of his Disciples, but many Wonders were done by the *Apostles* in his Name, and by a Power derived from him. All the Topics taken from sufficient Information, Ability to know, and Honesty to relate ; the Persecutions they underwent for the Truth of their Testimonies ; their Consciousness of the heinous Crime of Lying ; their preaching constantly their Accountableness to God for all their Actions ; and their Sense of the Justice of their Damnation, who did *Evil that Good might come of it* ; their leaving all things for the Truth of Christ ; their exposing themselves to Imprisonment, to Stripes, to be stoned, to be shipwrecked, to all sorts of Hazards and Inconveniences for the sake of Christ ; in short, every Topic that tends to confirm the Truth of the things which the first Disciples of Christ wrote or taught, has here its fullest Strength. Whatever then is urged from the *Credibility* of *Persons* who were *Eye-witnesses* ; who were well informed ; and had a Disposition to re-

late the Truth; must necessarily be allowed to have its full Weight, and is capable of being urged in the strongest Manner in behalf of the Christian Miracles.

But it may be replied to this, that we meet with other Miracles which stand upon this Foundation, and have the Support of credible Witnesses, *viz.* of pious, good, honest Vouchers, which yet are rejected as false. Be it so. I therefore add,

Secondly, That the *Enemies* to Christianity have born their Testimonies to the Miracles of Christ, as well as the Friends of the Gospel; and consequently the Truth of the Gospel does not depend solely upon the Testimonies of Men that may be charged, or are pretended to be charged, with *Credulity*, or *Folly*, or even *Forgery* itself. *Julian* the Apostate bears Witness to the Wonders done by *St. Paul*, when he says, ^t “ that he excelled all
“ the Workers of Tricks that ever were. And of our Saviour he says, ^u “ That He has not
“ been heard of much above three hundred
“ Years; nor did he do any thing worthy of
“ being spoken of, unless any one should
“ imagine, that to cure the *Lame and Blind*,
“ and

^t Τὸν πάντας πανταχῶ τοῦ πόποτε γόντας καὶ ἀπατεῶνας ὑπερβαλλόμενον Παῦλον. *Julian. apud Cyrillum l. iii.*

^u Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς—ὀλίγας πρὸς τῆς τριακοσίοις ἐνιαυτοῖς ὀνομάζεται, ἐργασαμένη παρ’ ὅν ἔζη χρόνον ἔργον ἔδεν ἀκοῆς ἀξιον, εἰ μή τις οἶεται τοῦ κυλλὰς καὶ τυφλὰς ἰασαῖς καὶ δαιμονῶντας ἐφορκίζειν ἐν Βηθσαϊδᾷ καὶ ἐν Βυθανίᾳ τῶν κώμαις, τῶν μεγίστων ἔργων ἑῶν. *Ibid, l. vi.*

“ and to *adjure* those that were possessed in the
 “ Villages of *Bethsaida* and *Bethany*, were
 “ any mighty Matters.” *Julian* might *lessen*
 and speak as contemptuously as he pleased of
 the Miracles of Christ; but as he does not *de-*
ny them to be done, it is not of any Conse-
 quence that he was willing to *diminish*, what
 he could not *contradict*. He owns here that
 he cured *the Lame*, and *Blind*, and *Mad*: He
 ought therefore to have made such Cures the
 Matter of Admiration, and not to have treat-
 ed them as Trifles. But let him treat them
 in his own manner, since he expressly allows
 such Facts to be done: and let him confine
 them to these two Villages, since Miracles are
 Miracles where-ever they are performed. So
 when he calls St. *Paul* *ῥήπτης*, one that by
Tricks imposes upon the People — However he
 expresses himself, he confesses the *Fact*, that
 the Apostle made Converts of the People by
 the *Signs* and *Wonders* he did. Just as when
 he speaks with Reproach and Ignominy of
 the Cross, and censures the Christians as
 “ w mad Men and Fools for leaving the eter-
 “ nal Gods, [he means the Heathen Gods]
 “ to go over to the *Jews* to worship a *dead*
 “ *Man*,” he must by this acknowledge that
 Christ did in fact *die*, as the Scriptures relate
 the Story. Again, x “ Jesus, says he, who
 “ *commanded*

w Ἀσθενετέρας ἐλαΐσειεν, οἱ — τῶν αἰώνιων ἀφέντες Θεὸς,
 ἐπὶ τῷ Ἰουδαίῳ μεταβῶσι νεκρὸν. Ibid.

x Ἰησοῦς ὁ, ὁ τοῖς πνεύμασιν ὀπιτάηων, καὶ βαδίζων ἐπὶ τῇ θα-
 λάσσῃ.

“ commanded Spirits, and walked upon the
 “ Sea, and drove out Devils, and, as you
 “ say, made Heaven and Earth : For none
 “ of his Disciples, except *John*, dared to say
 “ this ; nor did even *he* dare to say this plain-
 “ ly and explicitly : but let it be granted that
 “ he said this.” He allows, in these Words,
Jesus’s commanding Spirits, and his *walking*
on the Sea, and his *driving out Devils* ; and
 he owns that *St. John* said, that he *made the*
Heaven and Earth. This last he admits on-
 ly for Argument sake, but the other *three*
Miracles he allows as *Facts*, never denying
 that he *did* them ; which would have been
 more to *Julian’s* Purpose, than to treat them
 as *trifling Acts*. So when he resumes this
 Affair, and cites, on another Occasion, *Paul*,
 and *Matthew*, and *Mark*, and *Luke*, and
John, he acknowledges by this the *Books* un-
 der their respective Names, and cites them as
 Authorities from whom he all along argues.
 How would *Julian* have triumphed, had he
 had any Evidence by which he could have
 set aside the *Miracles* of Christ, or the A-
 postles ? Could he have *denied* the *Books* of the
 Apostles, or the *Facts* contained in them, his
 reasoning against Christianity would have had
 infinitely more *Strength* than it can have,
 when

λείπει, καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ἐξελώντων ὡς ὃ ὑμεῖς θέλετε, καὶ ἔξα-
 νόν καὶ τὴν γῆν ἀπεργασάμενοι· ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ ταῦτα τετόλμηκε πρὸς
 εἶπεν ὡς αὐτὸς τῶν μαθητῶν εἰ μὴ μόνον Ἰωάννης, ἐδὲ αὐτὸς
 σαφῶς, ἐδὲ τεχνῶς· ἀλλ’ εἰρηκίαν γε συγκαχωρήσω. Ibid.

when the Facts are *allowed*, and *accounted* for by what every Man of common Capacity sees to be absurd, and unequal to the Effects.

But let us ascend a little nearer to the Times of Christ. *Hierocles* wrote against the Christians some Thirty or Forty Years before *Julian*; and the Method he took was that of *comparing together* the Actions of our Lord, and Those of *Apollonius Tyanæus*. On this he says, that the Christians ^y “ make a great deal
“ of Noise, honouring *Jesus* as making the
“ *Blind to see*, and doing some such like
“ Wonders.” He goes on, and tells us, that ^z “ in the Times of our Ancestors, under
“ *Nero's* Reign, *Apollonius* of *Tyana* flou-
“ rished, who being very young, a mere
“ Boy, having sacrificed to *Esculapius* in *Æ-*
“ *gæ* of *Cilicia*, did many, and those wonder-
“ ful, Works.” After numbering up these Miracles of *Apollonius*, *Hierocles* goes on, and says, ^a “ For what Reason do I mention these?
“ That I may make a Comparison between
“ our

^y Ἄνω καὶ κάτω θρυλλῶσι, συμφωνῶντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὡς τυφλοῖς ἀναβλέψαι τε ὡραζόντα, καὶ πῶτα τοιαῦτα δράσαντα θαυμάσια. Euseb. c. Hieroclem.

^z Ἐπὶ τῷ περὶ τῶν ἡρώων καὶ τῷ Νέρωνος βασιλείᾳ, Ἀπολλωνίου ἡκμασεν ὁ Τυανεύς, ὅς ἐκ παιδὸς κομίδῃ νέκ, καὶ ἀφ' ἑπερ ἐν Ἀιγαῖς τῇ κελικίᾳ ἱεράτατο πρὸς εἰλαυθρόπῳ Ἀσκληπίῳ πολλὰ καὶ θαυμάσια διεπράξατο. Ibid.

^a Τίνος ἐν ἐνεκα τῶν ἐμνήθῳ, ἵνα ἐξῇ συσκεῖν τῷ ἡμετέρῳ ἀκείῃ καὶ βεβαίαν ἐφ' ἐκώσω κείπν, καὶ τῷ Χριστιανῶν κυφότητα. Ἐπερ ἡμεῖς μὲν τῷ τοιαῦτα πεπεικότες, καὶ θεόν, ἀλλὰ θεοῖς κεχαρισμένον ἄνδρα ἡγέμεθα. Οἱ δὲ δὲ ὁλίγας τε-ρεστέας πῶτα τῷ Ἰησοῦ Θεὸν ἀναγορεύουσι. Ibid.

“ *our exact and well grounded Judgment of*
 “ *each Fact, and the Trifling of the Christi-*
 “ *ans; since we do not look upon him that*
 “ *did these things as God, but as a Man fa-*
 “ *voured by the Gods; but They proclaim*
 “ *Jesus, for doing some small Miracles, to*
 “ *be God.*” Could *Hierocles* set out in this
 manner, and profess to *compare* the wonder-
 ful Actions of Two Persons, and at the same
 time not allow the One to have done any Facts
 at all? Could he pretend to compare *nothing*
 with *something*, in order to give the Prefe-
 rence of the One to the Other? Had he
 charged our Saviour with only *pretending* to a
 Power of working Miracles, whilst *Apolloni-*
us had a real Power; or if our Lord’s Won-
 ders were *Trifles* tho’ *real*, whereas those of
Apollonius were *great*, and shewed a much
 superior Power, it might have been worth his
 while to have run a Comparison between
 them: But to suppose our Saviour’s Miracles
 to have *not been worked at all*, and *Apollonius’s*
 to have been *real*, is not to compare *Two*
Things, or *Two Facts*, but *Nothing* with a re-
 al *Fact*, which is an Absurdity in Terms. If
Hierocles thought that the Facts of Both were
equally false, and that the Comparison was
 only of *Two Falshoods* which was the grossest:
 This might have been done consistently in-
 deed, but then his whole Scheme must have
 been altered. For he could not then have
preferr’d Apollonius to Christ, or have made
 him

him to be *greater* in Action, or more *highly* favoured by the Gods; for this requires a real Supposition and Belief that his Actions at least were *True*, not *false*: and consequently his *comparing* the Two Men's Actions together must suppose a *Reality* of *Both* their Actions. *Hierocles* therefore, a known, warm Opposer of Christianity, and an open avowed *Enemy* to Christians, by naming the Miracles of *Christ*, and comparing them with the Miracles of *Apollonius*, bears witness to the *Truth* of the Miracles of *Christ*, because he imagined the Miracles of *Apollonius* to be *true*.

But *Hierocles*, as *Eusebius* assures us, “took
“ not only his Sentiments, but his very
“ Words from others,” and particularly had *Celsus* before him: It may therefore be worth our while to consider what *Celsus* himself has said on this occasion; for *Celsus* is allowed by all to be as acute an *Enemy* to Christianity as ever wrote against it. If therefore it appears that He likewise *admitted* and *allowed* the Miracles of *Christ*, it is and must be evident, that we have the Testimony of *Enemies* as well as *Friends* in Confirmation of their Truth, and consequently may give Credit to them. For what *Enemies* as well as *Friends* admit, always is allowed to be highly probable. Now *Celsus* ^b “accuses our Saviour as being
“ enabled by *Art* or *Trick* to have done
N “ those

^b Κατηγορεῖ — καὶ τὸ σωτῆρος, ὡς γυνταία δυνάμεντος ἢ
ἔδοξε παράδοξα πειπνημέναι. Orig. c. Celsum. l. 1.

“ those Miracles he did.” These artful Impostors, it seems, could make those things *seem* to be, which *were not*, and those things which *are*, they could so dextrously *conceal* as to make Men believe they were not. When therefore *Celsus* would account in this manner for what our Saviour did, he must acknowledge the Facts done, or else it would be absurd to pretend to a Solution how they were done. And so in another place, when ^c he “ calumniates the Miracles of Christ as “ if they were performed by *Magic Arts*, “ and not by any Divine Power,” and adds, “ that *Jesus* was privately educated in *Egypt*, “ and becoming skilful in some of their *Arts*, “ returned from thence, proclaiming himself “ to be God by means of those *wonderful* “ *Powers* ;” — When He says this, He must own the *Facts done*, be it in his own way, by *Magic*, or in any other manner. When again he says, ^d “ that the *Wonders* which *Jesus* did, were what he *learnt* of the *Egyptians*,” — It is confessed that he *learnt* what he did, and *did* what he learnt, or else it would be ridiculous in this manner to attempt to solve the Appearance. Should any one object to this, and take notice that in other

^c Διαβάλλειν δ' αὐτὰς βελόμενθ' ὡς ἀπὸ μαγείας, καὶ εἰ
θεῖα δυνάμει γεγεννημένας. Φησὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν σκόπιον τραφέντα
— δυνάμεων πνέων περαδέντα, ἐκεῖθεν ἐπανελθεῖν, θεὸν δὲ
ἐκείνας τὰς δυνάμεις ἐαυτὸν ἀναγορεύοντα. Ibid.

^d Παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις μιμαθηκότα πεποιηκέναι. Ibid.

other places He ^e “ treats not only the Mira-
 “ cles which the Christians mentioned as done
 “ by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, but those like-
 “ wise which the *Jews* mention in *Their*
 “ Books, as *Fables*” — This will shew *Celsus*
 to have had no certain Scheme by which he
 could attack the *Christians*; and that he said
any thing either to *lessen*, or to *calumniate*,
 what he could not fairly refute: but he
 produces no *Voucher*, no *Authority*, whereby
 he could justify what he said.

Be it so then, that *Celsus* did in some Parts
 of his Book call the Miracles of the Bible,
Fables; yet if in other places he tries to *ac-*
count for them, and imputes them sometimes
 to *Magic*, at other times to *Art* or *slight of*
hand, he must suppose the *Facts* to be done.
 Thus he ^f pretends to grant “ to be true,
 “ whatever is said concerning either the *Cures*,
 “ or the *Resurrection* of *Jesus*, or his *feeding*
 “ many with a few Loaves, of which many
 “ Fragments were left.” But then “ pre-
 “ sently he makes them to be just the same
 “ with the *Feats* of those who are dextrous
 “ in *slight of hand*, and promise strange
 “ things; or of those who have learnt of the
 “ *Egyptians* to shew *Tricks* in public for
 N 2 “ half-

^e Καὶ τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν ἀναγκασμένα πρῶτα, εἴτ' Ἰουδαῖα,
 εἴτε καὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ μύθους ἐν νενομικῇ.
 Ibid. lib. 8.

^f Περιποιεῖται συγχωρεῖν ἀληθῆ ἐν, ὅσα περὶ θεραπειῶν,
 ἢ ἀναστάσεως, ἢ περὶ ἄρτων ὀλίγων θεοφανῶν πολλὰ ἀναγκ-
 αζεῖται, ἀρ' ὧν λεῖψαντα πολλὰ καταλείπειται. Id. l. 1,

“ half-pence ; and of those who *drive De-*
 “ *vils* out of People, and *blow away Dis-*
 “ *eases*, and call up the Souls of Heroes,
 “ and shew rich Entertainments, and Tables
 “ and Victuals of all sorts ; and moving Ani-
 “ mals, which are not Animals, but only
 “ *appear* to be such.” It was a ridiculous
 Solution of the Miracles done by Christ, to
 treat them in this manner ; for whoever went
 about (as *Origen* here remarks) to s “ shew
 “ Tricks, in order to mend the *Manners* of
 “ the World, or to teach them so to live as
 “ that they might be justified before God ?”
 But when he compares the wonderful Works
 of Christ with the *Tricks* of these Circulators,
 he must suppose the Facts done, *really* or in
Appearance ; and if they were the Arts of
Legerdemain, as in general he supposes, yet
 this *allows* the things for which he is trying
 to account.

But say that *Celsus* did not at all believe,
 nor admit the Facts which were said to be
 done by Christ, but is all along speaking of
 what *Christians* believed and admitted ;—this
 shews that he *knew* of them ; and tho’ he did
 not

* Καὶ ἐνδεώς κοινοποιεῖ αὐτὰ πρὸς τὰ ἔργα γρήτων, αἷς ὑπε-
 ρφυσμένων θαυμασιότηρα, καὶ πρὸς τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν μαδόντων ὑπὸ
 Αἰγυπτίων ἐπιτελέμενα ἐν μέσαις ἀγοραῖς, ὀλίγων ὁβελῶν ἀπο-
 δομένων τὰ σεμνὰ μαθήματα, καὶ δαίμονας ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων ἐξε-
 λαυνόντων, καὶ νόσους ἀπορυσσόντων, καὶ ψυχὰς ἡρώων ἀνακαλῶν-
 των, δειπνὰ τε πολυτελῆ καὶ τραπέζας καὶ πέμματα καὶ ὅσα τι
 ἐκ ὄντα δεικνύων, καὶ ὡς ζῶα κινούντων ἐκ ἀληθῶς ὄντα ζῶα
 ἀλλὰ μέχρι φαντασίας φαινόμενα ποιεῖν. Ibid.

not profess his *Belief* of them, yet he did not offer to refute those who did believe them by any *Historical Evidence* against them. He did not produce any Authority against them, which his Subject naturally led him to do, had he been able ; and whilst he tries to account for them by *Art*, or Skill in *Magic*, or *Legerdemain*, he must either admit *something* to be done by Christ, or he must account for *nothing* by his *Magic* or *Legerdemain*. In the first case, He is an *Enemy attesting* a Fact ; which is a Confirmation positive and direct : In the other case, He does *not deny*, but attempts to *solve* a *Fact* ; which necessarily must suppose the *Fact*, tho' he differs about the *Means* by which it was done. But,

Thirdly, The Miracles of Christ have a peculiar Evidence, which is strictly conclusive to any one that will attend. If we ourselves can *see*, and be as certain as our Senses can make us, that our Saviour and his Apostles were under the Influence of a Power vastly superior to That of any Man, then we ourselves may *see* a Testimony equal to what we can desire, concurring with the Testimony which we have from both Friends and Enemies ; and giving a Degree of Credibility, which the Miracles of all other Persons are defective in. I do not by this mean to affirm, that all other Miracles are *fictitious* : Nor would I be understood, as if all others were
to

to be condemned as *false*, except those that the Scripture mentions. I enter not into that Question, nor concern myself one way or other about it. They may, at least some of them may be, what their Relators have said about them: And if the Evidence given be such as satisfies a reasonable Enquirer, He ought to acquiesce, and admit them to be true. But if, on the other hand, the Attestation be such as leaves the mind *dubious* and *suspicious*, or *unsatisfied*, They may be rejected without any Mischief; and yet the Miracles of the Apostles, and of their *Master*, may be maintained as certain and true, which is all that I am concerned to make good.

To shew then the Credibility of the Miracles of Christ, it is necessary to observe, that no Human Power can, or does extend to the *Foretelling* future Events: And if any Man can precisely determine what shall happen at any given distance of Time; or can tell the Circumstances of Actions, or even Actions themselves, many Years, or many Hundreds of Years before they come to pass:—Such Man must be assisted with a Degree of Knowledge greater than ever falls to the lot of common Men. Now the New Testament affords us many Instances of this sort of Knowledge in *Jesus Christ*; and his *Apostles* had the same sort of Knowledge communicated to them: And so had *Moses* and the *Prophets* the same. E. g. The Destruction of
Jerusalem

Jerusalem was foretold ; its being to be trod down of the Gentiles till the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ; its present Continuance in the State which was so punctually foretold ; the *Preservation* of the *Jews* amidst all the Persecutions and Hatred they every where lie under : The *Blindness* that has happened to them : The *Apostacy* that has been in the Church of Christ : The very *Manner* and *Circumstances* of the *Apostacy*, which was to consist in doing the very things which the Gospel forbids : The coming of the Man of Sin, who as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God : The manner of his gaining his Power by Signs, and lying Wonders, and all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness : The Worship of Demons, or Souls departed : The forbidding to marry : The abstaining from Meats, which God hath created to be received with Thankfulness : The Persecuting Spirit, and That Dominion over the Lord's Heritage, which was to be the Mark of that idolatrous Power which was to arise — These and a great many other things have been foretold by our Saviour and his Apostles ; and the Event has exactly verified the Prediction.

I mention not several other things foretold in the Scriptures, plain, easily intelligible, express, not liable to be charged with being forged after the Events. Now We ourselves see these Predictions actually fulfilled : And
We

We are certain that Those who could *foretel* such wonderful Events, must have been under the Influence of a Power superior to That of Man. Suppose now, that the Men who so truly *foretold* things to come, are said by *credible Witnesses* to have worked *Miracles*, the Attestation instantly becomes credible, because We ourselves are sure that They were under a *supernatural, extraordinary* Power: a Power! able and sufficient to produce the Miracles they are said to have performed.

I do not from hence infer, (nor indeed can any one justly infer) that all Miracles are forged or counterfeit, that are *not attended* with Prophecy; but, (which is all that I want to prove) that those *are credible* that are accompanied with it. They who *see* a Miracle done, are as sure as their *own Eyes* can make them, of the Truth of such a Fact. But then the Testimony of *Eye-witnesses*, or the Report of such to others, may be perhaps doubted or denied, when it comes to be handed down from one to another, if the Fact be such as carries great Improbability in its Nature. But where a Man can *see* himself a plain Exercise of a *supernatural* Power in *one* Instance, He can have no good reason to doubt of, or to deny it in *another*, if that *other* comes attested by Men of Abilities and Integrity. Why should any one doubt of his performing a *Miracle*, whom we ourselves can *see* to have been under a *supernatural Influence*,

fluence, when we have the Testimony of very credible Witnesses, that he did do one? Were it only said, without any Circumstance, or without any other Evidence, that such a one had an extraordinary Power which he could exert as he pleased, this might justly be *suspected* or *denied*: But if we ourselves can see such Power *actually exerted*, in a Case beyond the natural Powers of Man, we may easily infer the *Credibility* of a *Fact* reported of the same Person, tho' beyond the Powers of Man.

Some perhaps may say, that this is proving the Credibility of one dubious thing by another: They will urge the Ambiguity, the Uncertainty of all such Books as contain, or pretend to contain Predictions: And they will appeal for the Truth of their Assertions to the *Revelations* of St. *John*, or to the Prophecies of *Daniel*; and, in short, to the very Nature of the Prophetic Language, which they will pretend to be perfectly unintelligible.

But This is no manner of Answer to the Argument. It is just such reasoning as this—Poetical Figures and Expressions are often dark, and ambiguous, in the very best Writers; and Commentators have often differed, and new Discoveries have been made about the Meaning of Passages which had escaped former Writers on them—Therefore the *Whole* in those Writers is perfectly unintelligible.

ble. When it was foretold that the Messiah was to be a *Man of Sorrows*, to be *wounded for our Transgressions*, to be *cut off from the Land of the Living*, could there be any thing expressed more plain and more intelligible? Are there not many, very many, plain clear Prophecies, such as neither Art nor Interest can elude? Is not the *Apostacy* in the Church of Christ so described, that a Man must shut his Eyes not to see it? But then if People will *close their Eyes*, lest at any time they should see with them, or *shut their Ears* lest they should hear, the want of understanding arises, not from want of Light or Clearness in the Object, but from Obstinacy or Perverseness, against which God has provided no Remedy. Are not the particular Circumstances of the Corruption that has happened in the Church of Christ clearly and expressly *foretold*? And do not those, whose Interest it is to evade the Charge, pervert the plainest Words, that they may not be self-condemned? Is not the *State* of the *Jews* at this present Time just as St. *Paul* foretold it should be? And so it is with *Christianity*, just as our Saviour and the Apostles described it in the Times they mentioned: And what is very remarkable — The Madness of Christians has accomplished, what was expressly and in Terms *forbidden* by Christ. So that it is not merely a *Prophecy* that is *accomplished*; but it is a Completion of one, which *forbad* the ve-

ry Practices which they have introduced. How has the Mystery of Iniquity worked *with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness?*

The first grand Principle of all Religion, natural as well as revealed, of the *Jewish* as well as of the *Christian*, is, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve*: And the second is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*. These are so plain and clear, that no one can contest them. Is there then not an *Apostacy* foretold, or hath not *the Spirit* spoken expressly, *that in the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith?* 1 Tim. iv. 1--4. If a Question were to arise, In what was this Apostacy to consist? The Apostle tells us, it was to consist in the Violation of this First grand Principle of all Religion, in the introducing of another Object of Worship besides God; in the *worshipping* of *Demons*; in praying and paying Honour to *departed Men and Women*; in calling for Aid upon *Souls departed*. And is not the *Mother of Fornication* described as *drunken with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus?* Rev. xvii. 6. Is not this in express Contradiction to *Both* the Grand Principles of the Religion of Christ? Look into the World, and see if the Event has not been as exactly completed, as it was foretold. Supposing therefore that there is an Obscurity in *several* Prophecies, it

is very unfair to argue from them, as if *all* Prophecy were unintelligible, when there are so many *clear* and *plain* Predictions, not liable to any such Objection. Surely the way of reasoning from *Prophecy*, is to be taken from what is *clear*, and thence to proceed to what is more hard or intricate, and thus to try from plain things to discover obscure ones; and not to pretend that *every thing* is obscure, and therefore that *all* is to be rejected. Let any one apply such a Method to *Geometry*, or to what is *scientific*; and argue, that because Sir *Isaac Newton's* Principles are hard, and Few are capable of understanding them *throughout*, therefore *all Geometry* is unintelligible, and ought to be discarded, as not worth the trouble of Study or Attention.

What I would infer from all this is, That we ourselves, who are now alive, can *see* exactly such a State of things in the World, as the Sacred Books have all along declared that there should be. Let the intelligent Christian look about him, and see, and wonder. The Writers of those Books could not *of Themselves*, or by any common Sagacity, *foresee* such a State, or *foretell* that things should come to pass in the particular Manner which they described, and with all the Circumstances which they foretold. They must therefore have been under the Influence of some *supernatural* Power, which enabled them to discover what they *foretold*. Now
the

the Being that enabled them to *foretell* Events, at such *distant* Periods, and so *minutely*, might enable them to *do* what credible Witnesses have related concerning them. From whence it follows undeniably, that the *Miracles* of the Gospel are *credible*, and may justly be deemed *True*, whatever becomes of all others. Whilst we have no grounds to think, that other People were under any *supernatural Influence*, except merely the Report that they worked *Miracles*, one may suspect, or doubt, or even deny the Facts they are said to have done; or leave them to the Credit of those who relate them: But when we are sure that Christ and his Apostles were under the Influence of some Power superior to that of Man, in *one* Instance, of which we ourselves are competent Judges; we may be sure that the Miracles performed by them ought to be looked upon as credible, since the supernatural Power that enabled them to foretell future Events was sufficient to enable them to work Miracles.

Thus have I considered the Two Points I proposed to speak to. If I have been able to throw any Light on either of them, and particularly on the *Last*, I shall rejoice. It is certain, that many good Men, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, have been of late not a little perplexed in their Minds, about the *Credibility* of Miracles. They see the

the Folly of believing the *Popish* and other Legendary Stories ; and yet cannot find a Way to extricate themselves out of the Labyrinth they are in. If the Clue here given be of Use, I have my End ; if not, it behoves all who regard the Religion of Christ, to point out a better and surer ; and so to treat of the Miracles done since the Apostolic Times, as not to throw insuperable Difficulties on Those of our Saviour and his Apostles.

Permit me to add one Thing before I conclude. There are in the World, 1st, Accounts of Miracles done by and among the *Heathen*, There are, 2. The *Jewish* and *Christian* Miracles, *i. e.* those done in the Old Testament, and by Christ and his Apostles ; which I reckon as standing on the same Foot. There are, 3. The Miracles related by the *Fathers* : And there are, 4. The *Popish* Miracles, of which one may read to a Surfeit in the *Writers* or Collectors of their *Saints Lives*. I have sufficiently shewn, why the *Jewish* and *Christian* Miracles are *credible*. It behoves those, who reject the *Heathen* and the *Popish* Miracles, to shew the Difference, as to *Credibility*, betwixt Them and Those of the *Fathers* : Or if Those of the *Fathers* are to be admitted upon the Evidence of their *Authority* ; then, why are the *Heathen* and *Popish* Miracles to be rejected, which seem to stand on equal Authority ? Or if the Miracles of the *Papists* are to be admitted, then why are
Those

Those of the *Heathen* to be rejected? Or if Those of the *Fathers* are to be admitted—Are *All* of Them, or *Some* only? Or why are *Some* of Them only to be credited, and *which*? And what *Criteria* are there, by which we may distinguish which are, and which are not to be *credited*? An Enquiry into these Particulars is beyond the Bounds of what I undertook ; which being only to shew, what are the Grounds upon which the Credibility of Miracles, *in general*, is founded ; and, upon what Grounds the Miracles of the Gospel, *in particular*, are credible : I shall leave those other Points to be discussed by Those, who are, or may be, engaged in the Controversy with Dr. MIDDLETON.

A
DISSERTATION

On MARK xvi. 17, 18.

*And these Signs shall follow them that believe :
In my Name shall they cast out Devils ;
They shall speak with new Tongues ; They
shall take up Serpents, and if they drink
any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ;
They shall lay hands on the Sick, and they
shall recover.*

WHAT our Saviour intended by the
Word *Signs*, is sufficiently clear from
the Instances here specified ; by which it is
plain that certain extraordinary miraculous
Gifts or *Powers* are here promised to *Them*
that believe in Him. That these Signs were
manifested in and by the *Apostles*, and others,
Jews and *Gentiles*, after our Lord's Death
and Ascension, needs no Proof to any that
give Credit to the New Testament. It may
be however proper just to mention some par-
ticular Instances : And as to the Credibility
P of

of them, I shall refer the Reader to what I have already said.

What the particular *Distemper*, or *Disorder* was, which was attributed or imputed to *Devils* or *Demons*; and whether such Beings do, or did, in fact *obsefs* or *possess* any body; or whether such or such peculiar *ill Habit*, or *Crafs* of Body, curable by Art, or incurable by human means, is designed by that Expression, let the learned Reader, who has looked into *Hippocrates De Morbo Sacro*, and other *Physicians* among the *Antients*, or into the judicious *Dr. Mead's Medica Sacra*, not long since published, judge. I shall not enter into that Enquiry here; but shall only observe that it is well known, that both *Greeks* and *Romans* imputed certain Disorders of the Body to *Demons*; and from the *Symptoms* named the *very Demon* that was supposed to possess the miserable Mortal. The *Sign* here promised by our Lord was, a Power in an extraordinary and miraculous manner to cure such Persons as laboured under the Distresses, either supposed to be, or which actually were, inflicted by *Demons*. Or if a Spirit was the real, or supposed, Worker of such Actions as served to impose on People, and to lead them into false Notions of *Spiritual Dominion*, which might turn them from the living God; then the *Sign* promised was a Power, in an extraordinary and miraculous manner, to put an End to all such

such Deceit, and to take away the Cause of it. Thus, *When a damsel possessed with a Spirit of Divination followed Paul about for many Days, Paul said unto the Spirit, I command thee in name of Jesus Christ to come out of her: And he came out the same hour, Acts xvi. 16—18.* It is remarked of St. Peter, that he cured such as were troubled with unclean Spirits, *Acts v. 16.* Philip likewise at Samaria did many *Wonders and Signs, and many that had unclean Spirits were healed by him, Acts viii. 7.* And lastly, St. Paul did in like manner cure those that were *possessed of evil Spirits. Acts xix. 12.*

The second Sign here promised was, that They who believe in Christ, should *speake with New Tongues.* The Descent of the Holy Ghost, so particularly described, *Acts ii.* is a sufficient Confirmation of this. At that time, *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speake with other Tongues as the Spirit gave them Utterance, ver. 4.* And the People of the several Parts of the World that happened to be there present, *heard them speake, in their respective Tongues, the wonderful Works of God, ver. 11.* This Gift was likewise granted to the Gentiles, who were assembled with Cornelius to hear the Gospel from Peter: When the Gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out on Them, *They spake with Tongues, and magnified God, Acts x. 45, 46.* And it is plain that this Gift was not

uncommon at *Corinth*, as appears from St. *Paul's* Account of the spiritual Gifts amongst them, *1 Cor.* xii. 10. xiv. 5, &c. And when the Twelve Disciples of *John* at *Ephe-sus* received the Holy Ghost, *they spake with Tongues and prophesied*, *Acts* xix. 6.

A *Third* Sign was, *They shall take up Ser-pents* without any hurt, an Instance of which we meet with, *Acts* xxviii. 5. where a *Viper* having fastned on St. *Paul's* Hand, *He shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.*

As to the Sign joined with this—*If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them*—Tho' we have not an Instance in the New Testament of this, yet the Powers actually granted shew, that it is not incredible but that some or other might have had it in that Age of Miracles.

The *Last* Sign is—*They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* There is no occasion to mention any other Instances of this, than that *when the Father of Publius* lay sick of a Fever and Bloody Flux, *Paul* laid his hands on him and healed him, *Acts* xxviii. 8.

There is then no doubt but the *Apostles* and *Others*, received and exerted these extraordinary Powers, as proper Occasions offered. But our Saviour assuring the Apostles, that *These Signs shall follow them that believe*, a Question arises about the Meaning and *Extent* of the Words,—*Them that Believe.* Do they imply,

imply, that ALL such as believe *Jesus* to be *The Christ* shall be enabled to exert these extraordinary Powers? Or do they mean, that *All* shall have *All* these Powers? Or do they signify, that Those who have a *miraculous Faith*—such a Faith as will enable a Man to remove Mountains—They shall be enabled to manifest these Signs? If the Former be the true meaning of the Word *Believe*, as I think it is, then How was the Promise made good, since ALL that *believe* are not *Workers of Miracles*; neither have ALL the Gifts of Healing; neither do ALL *Speak with Tongues*, 1 Cor. xii. 29, 30. And yet in virtue of the Promise made, that *These Signs shall follow them that believe*, it should seem that *All Believers* should have those extraordinary Powers. To clear up this Matter let it be observed,

1. It is plain from the New Testament, that the Gifts of the Spirit were not all granted to any One of the Disciples of Christ, unless it were to the *Apostles* alone. As to all others—The Gifts of *Healing* were to some; to others the *working of Miracles*; to others *Prophecy*; to others *discerning of Spirits*; to others *divers kinds of Tongues*; to others still *the Interpretation of Tongues*, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10. It is not my Design to enter into a particular Discussion of the Nature of the several Gifts of the Spirit; but to observe only, That if the promised Signs had *all* been intended to be given to *All Believers*, then *Every one* that Believes in

in Christ, might have had some reason to expect *All* these Powers. But as in Fact, the Gift of *Healing* was granted to One, and That of *Tongues* was given to Another—We must understand the Promise of our Lord, not that *All Believers* were to have *all* these Signs; but that among them that believed in Him, *Some* should have *Some* Gifts, *Others* should have *Others*. Again,

2. The Intent of our Lord in these Words was not, That ALL, in all *future Generations*, *for ever*, who should believe in him, should be enabled to work Miracles; or that those *Signs* should be continued to, or among *Believers*, till his second coming. For were That the case, it would follow, that there was now *no Faith* upon Earth, or that there were no *Believers* now, since none are now able to shew their Faith by their miraculous Works. There must then be a proper Limitation to those Words—*Them that believe*: And as the Declaration was made to the *Apostles*, who were to go and preach the Gospel to all Nations, The Words may mean no more than This—Go ye into all the World, and make Disciples of ALL People: And as *You* have received a Power to work *Miracles*, so shall *Others* that Believe receive a like Power; Some in One kind, Some in Another, as God shall see most fit and proper. But *how long* these Powers were to continue, or *when* they should cease, cannot be argued from these

these Words. It is enough that the Fact was true, according to the Promise.

3. There seems to have been a Necessity that our Saviour, and his immediate Followers, should have exerted miraculous Powers at that Time, since they were to open the Kingdom of Heaven, and to preach the Gospel to the World. But the same reason does not seem to hold equally necessary in after times, when the Religion of Christ became fully planted in the World. *Jesus* himself appeared in a manner which the *Jews* did not expect: And had they studied the Scriptures without Prejudice, yet the Prophecies concerning the Christ were only *in part* fulfilled by our Saviour, either during his Life, or at his Death. Could then the *Jews* be any ways assured that He was *The Christ*, when several Prophecies concerning *The Christ* were not yet compleated? Which way could they possibly see *Jesus* to be a *Prince*, or to have *the Government on his Shoulders*, when they saw him nothing but a *Man of Sorrows*, and *cut off from the Land of the Living*? Miraculous Powers therefore were necessary *Attestations* of God to *Jesus*; and after his Death to his *Disciples*, to assure them that He was *The Christ*; and to shew the Reasonableness of Believing Him to be the Person designed in all the Prophets, tho' all things were *not actually fulfilled* that had been spoken, but were gradually *fulfilling*. When the Time
was

was come, that either *The Messiah* must have made his Appearance, or else that He could not appear at all ; *i. e.* When *the Scepter* was departed from *Judah*, and the *Jewish State* and Government was at an End, (*Before* which time the *Messiah* was to come, according to the Prophets) and their Temple was destroyed, and the People were dispersed, there ceased to be the same reason for *Miraculous Attestations*, as there was before. For then an honest Perusal of the Scriptures would shew how all things *were* fulfilled, or *might* be fulfilled ; and every one might be able to determine, that He in whom all the Prophecies to that time agreed was in truth *The Christ*.

But then in regard to the *Gentiles*, the case seems different. They had no Knowledge of the Scriptures, nor were they acquainted with the Prophets. Miracles therefore were necessary *Attestations* to Them, that *Jesus* was the Person who was *Lord of all*, and to whom *all Power in Heaven and Earth*, and *all Judgment was committed* : *Miraculous Attestations*, I say, were necessary *at that Time* : But when the *Gentile Converts* had the Scriptures in their Hands, and could examine into the Truth, and could see how exactly the Prophecies of Scripture were fulfilled in our Saviour, and could teach and explain to Others what they understood, or might understand, *Themselves* ; then *miraculous Attestations* seem

seem not so *necessary* for the Propagation of the Gospel; seeing the same Design might be carried on without Miracle. It depended entirely on the good Will of God, in what manner, and in what degree, and at what Time, and on what Persons, He would confer such Powers^a. “It was not necessary,” say the *Apostolical Constitutions*, (a Book which carries manifest Marks of not being the Work of Them whose Name it bears; however, of good Authority in this case.) “It was not necessary, that Every Believer should cast out Devils, or raise the dead, or speak with Tongues, but that whosoever was thought worthy to have a Gift for any useful Purpose,” should use it “for the Salvation of Unbelievers.”

4. Whoever then reads the New Testament with Care, will find, that whether miraculous Gifts did, or did not, continue in the Church after the Apostolic Age, God has not left Himself *without witness* in the World; but has given so full Assurance of the Truth of the Gospel, that it must be great Negligence, or Carelessness, or something very faulty, to overlook or despise the Evidence which That affords. But it is foreign to my Subject, to enter further into this Subject.

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5. It

^a Οὐκ ἐπάναγκες ἔν παντα πᾶσιν δαίμονας ἐκβάλλειν, ἢ νεκροὺς ἀνίσταν ἢ γλώσσαις λαλεῖν· ἀλλὰ τὰ ἀξιοθέντα χάρισμα-
τος ὅτι πῶς αὐτὰ χρησίμη εἰς σωτηρίαν τῶ ἀπίστων. Const.
Apost. Lib. viii. c. 1.

5. It may be worth while to observe, that notwithstanding every extraordinary or miraculous Power is called *χάρισμα*, a Gift; and granting it to be true, that there are none who believe in Christ, or thro' Christ in God, who have not received *χάρισμα*, a Gift; yet it must not be inferr'd from such Expression, that every one who is said to receive *χάρισμα*, a Gift, received one of the miraculous Sort. The Antients put a just Distinction between *spiritual Gifts*. They maintained, ^b " That there is no Man that believed
 " in God thro' Christ, who has not received
 " a spiritual Gift." Accordingly they said,
 " ^c That to have been delivered from the
 " *Impiety of Polytheism*, and to have believed
 " in God the Father thro' Christ, is the *Gift*
 " of God. So too, to have cast off the *Jewish*
 " *Veil*, and to have believed, that by the
 " good Will of God, the only begotten be-
 " fore

^b Ἐπεὶ ἓκ ἓστιν ἄνθρωπος πειδίους διὰ χριστεῖς εἰς τὸ θεόν, ὃς ἓκ εἴληψε χάρισμα πνευματικόν. Apost. Const. Lib. viii. c. i.

^c Αὐτὸ τε γὰρ ἀπαλλαγῆναι πολυθέου ἀσεβείας, καὶ πειδίσει θεῷ πατρὶ διὰ χριστεῖς χάρισμά ἐστι θεῷ. Τὸ τε ἀπορρίψαι τὸ Ἰουδαϊκὸν κάλυμμα, καὶ πειδίσει ὅτι εὐδοκίᾳ θεῷ ὁ παρὰ αἰῶνων μονοφυΐης ἐν ὁσέρῳ καιρῷ ἐκ παρθένου γεγέννηται δίχα ὁμιλίας ἀνδρός· καὶ ὅτι ἐπολιτίδευστο ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἀνεὺ ἁμαρτίας, πληρώσας πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην καὶ τῷ νόμῳ· καὶ ὅτι συγχωρήσει θεῷ σωρὲν ὑπέμεινεν ἀσχιώης καταφρονήσας ὁ θεὸς λόγος· καὶ ὅτι ἀπέθανε, καὶ ἐτάφη καὶ ἀνέστη διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν, καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τεσσαρῶντα ἡμέρας παρεμείνας τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, καὶ πληρώσας πᾶσαν διάταξιν ἀναλήφου ἐπ' ὅφεισιν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ ἀποσεῖλαι αὐτὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα. Ὅ ταῦτα πτεύσας, ἔχαιπλῶς ἐδὲ ἀλόγως, ἀλλὰ κρίσει καὶ πληροφορίᾳ, χαρισμα εἴληφεν ἐκ θεῷ. Constit. Apost. Lib. viii. c. i.

“ fore all Ages was, in the last time, born
 “ of a Virgin without Converse with Man ;
 “ and that as Man he lived without Sin, hav-
 “ ing fulfilled all the Righteousness of the
 “ Law ; and that by the Permission of God,
 “ God the Word, *despising the Shame, en-
 “ dured the Cross ;* and that he *died*, and was
 “ buried, and arose in Three Days ; and af-
 “ ter his Resurrection, having continued
 “ with the Apostles forty Days, and having
 “ fulfilled all that was appointed, was taken
 “ up in their Sight to God the Father that
 “ sent him ; He that has believed these
 “ things—with Judgment and in full Assu-
 “ rance, has received *χάρισμα*, a Gift from
 “ God.” The Author goes on, and gives a
 very good piece of Advice : ^d “ Let not,”
 says he, “ any one of those, who work Signs
 “ *and Wonders*, judge, or condemn, any one
 “ of the Faithful that is not deemed worthy
 “ to *work* them : For the *χαρίσματα*, the
 “ Gifts of God, which are given by Him
 “ thro’ Christ, are different ; for you have
 “ received *This*, another has received some
 “ other ; either the Word of *Wisdom*, or of
 “ *Knowledge*, or of *Discernment of Spirits*,
 “ or *Foreknowledge* of things to come, or the
 “ *Word*

Q²

^d Μὴ ἔν τις τῶ ποιούντων σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα κρινέτω πρὸς τῶ π-
 σωὶν μὴ ἀξιοθέντα ἐνεργεῖν ; Διαφορὰ γάρ ἐστι τὰ τῶ θεοῦ χα-
 ρίσματα, παρ’ αὐτῶ δια χειρὸς διδόμενα. Καὶ σὺ μὲ εἴληφας
 τὸ ἐπεῖν ὅτι ἄλλο πῶς ἢ γὰρ λόγον σοφίας, ἢ γνώσεως, ἢ
 διακρίσεως πνευμάτων, ἢ πρόγνωσιν τῶ μελλόντων, ἢ λόγον δι-
 δακτικόν, ἢ ἀνεξιχνίασιν, ἢ ἐκκράτειαν ἐννομον. Ibid.

“ *Word of Teaching, or Patience, or Continu-
“ nence.*” All these are here called the *Gifts*
of God ; and all are to be used according to
his Will who gives them.

The Word then *χαρίσματα*, or *Gift*, signifies an *extraordinary Endowment* ; and being a general Word, it comprehends not only the *miraculous* Gifts of the Spirit, such as curing the Sick, or restoring Eyes to the Blind, or Feet to the Lame, or Life to the Dead ; but it equally expresses such Acts of *Faith* and *good Life*, as every sincere Believer was wont to practise ; such as *bearing Evils, Continence*, and such like. If therefore any ancient Writer speaks of the *Gifts* of God, with which good Men were particularly endowed, it does not follow that such Men had a Power of *working Miracles*, unless it be expressly said, that the *Gifts* they had were of the *miraculous* Kind. But, to return to the Words of our Saviour.

6. Tho’ the Words in *St. Mark*, taken at large, may possibly signify — *All these Signs shall be given to every particular Believer*, so that *every one* shall be enabled to work every one of them : Or they may signify — These Signs shall be given to Believers, some to one, some to another ; and some shall have no miraculous Gifts, tho’ All shall have some spiritual Gift or Endowment — Tho’, I say, from the Words used by our Saviour one cannot determine with Precision the Extent of the Promise,

mise, yet one may recur to History and Experience, and from thence one may with tolerable Exactness assign the Meaning of those Words. Thus, when our Saviour told his Apostles that the Holy Spirit *should guide them into ALL Truth* --- From the mere Expression one cannot say, whether He was to guide them into all *Philosophical* and *Mathematical* Truth, or whether the general Word is not to be confined to *all Truth relative to the Messiah*, and the Means of setting up his Kingdom. As the Event must determine the Extent of such *universal* Propositions, no one must argue from the bare Words, that the Apostles were led into *all* Sorts of Truth universally, because they had a Promise made them; that might possibly imply such a Meaning.

When indeed a Proposition is universal, *e. g. Children obey your Parents in all things* --- and common Sense limits it by the plain Absurdity of taking the Words as universally as the Expression is, the Case is clear. And in general it is so in all *moral* Writings, where Words are not to be understood strictly, as in *Physical* or *Mathematical* Discourses.

But here it may be suggested, that a *Promise* is made; and in Cases of *Promises* or *Grants*, no Limitation is to be admitted, but what the Words themselves, which convey the Right, admit. If a Promise be *universal*, and the Performance be *partial*, the Grantee receives not the Thing promised, but

at

at best a *Part* only of what he had reason to expect. If therefore our Saviour assured his Apostles, that such or such Signs should follow them that *believe*, *all* that *believe* have reason to expect the Performance of the Promise.

But This Difficulty ceases, provided we can know the *real Intention* of him that makes the Promise. For however a Promise may be expressed, if we by any means can tell what is the *Intention* of the Grantor, we ought to interpret the *Words* of the Grant by the *Intention* and *Design* of him that makes the Promise; and not argue that more *must* have been *intended*, because the *Words* made use of may seem to imply more. In the case of a Being whom we know antecedently to be *pure, holy, just*, one may be certain from the *Grant given*, what was the *Intention* of the Promise made; and in consequence, that the general Words made use of must be understood with Limitation, if it appears *in fact* that the Promise is limited. Supposing then that the Words in St. *Mark* were verified only in this limited manner, *viz.* That Some who did believe the Gospel did in fact exert extraordinary *miraculous* Powers, Some in one kind, Some in another, and Others still who enjoyed Spiritual Endowments, yet did no Miracles—One might argue justly from the Effect to the Cause, that this was the full *Intent* of the Promise of our Saviour, because this was all that was made good.

But

But supposing that the Promise of our Saviour was made good to *All* that Believed at first, and that *All* the First Christians had Supernatural Endowments poured out upon them; or supposing that Only *Some Believers* had miraculous Gifts bestowed upon them, it cannot be inferr'd from the Words of our Lord, *How long* those Signs were to continue, or *When* they were to *cease*, any more than you can infer that the Apostles were to live *for ever*, because a Promise was made in general Words, which may signify to be with *them always, even unto the End of the World*. It neither follows that *any now a-days* shall be impowered to work Miracles; nor that any in the Ages following the Apostolic Age could expect such a Privilege; but the *Fact* is to be examined into, and a diligent Enquiry is to be made, *How long* the miraculous Powers did subsist, and whether *They do subsist* to this Day, or not.

7. It may be worth while to enquire, whether *All* Christians at first had, or had not, some Extraordinary Powers conveyed to them at their Baptism into Christianity. If it be admitted, That *All* Christians had not *All* Gifts, as seems very clear from many Passages in the New Testament, yet had not *All* Christians *some* Gift or other *given them to profit withal*?

That *All* Christians had *spiritual Gifts* imparted to them, (taking the Word *Gift*, as above

above explained) must certainly be admitted. But that *All* had *miraculous* Powers, is nowhere, I think, asserted in the New Testament. Under this Term, *miraculous Powers*, I comprehend all those Supernatural Endowments, which our Lord intended by the Term *Signs*: Such as *casting out Devils, speaking with Tongues, healing the Sick, Prophecy, discerning of Spirits*, and such like. But as to inward Graces, extraordinary bearing up against Evils, great Virtues, great Honesty, Sobriety, Steadiness, Courage, &c. — These are not the Subjects of the present Enquiry.

When the First Disciples were made to the Number of *Three Thousand*, and were baptized, it is not said that *any* of them did any *Miracles*, but only that *Signs and Wonders were done by the Apostles*, *Acts* ii. 43. This Conversion being made at the Time when the Holy Ghost descended, and manifested himself by the Apostles speaking with Tongues — Had the *Three Thousand* been *all* endowed with a Power of working *Miracles*, it could not but have been taken notice of. And so again, when the Disciples were encreased to about *Five Thousand*, and *Peter* and *John* were commanded by the High Priest and Others not to preach any more in the Name of *Jesus*, The Apostles went to their own Company, and made a Report of all that the chief Priests and Elders had said unto them. Upon this

this they magnify God, and pray, *that Signs and Wonders may be done by the Name of thy holy Child Jesus*, and that *with all boldness they may speak thy word*, Acts iv. 29, 30. What was the Result of this? It is added immediately——*When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*. Here were Two Things prayed for; the One was, that they might *with all boldness speak the word*; the Other was, that *Signs and Wonders might be done by the name of Jesus*. When the Holy Ghost fell on them, it is observed, *They ALL spake the Word of God with Boldness*: But as to the *Apostles*, it is remarked of *Them*, that *with great Power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus*. Would this Difference have been observed, if All there present had been endowed with Supernatural Powers to work *Miracles*? Would the *great Power* of the *Apostles* have been so particularly mentioned, if *all others* had had the like Power? Or would it not more naturally have been said, that *Signs and Wonders were done by ALL*, had this been the case, than that *ALL spake the Word of God with boldness*? So again, it is said, Acts v. 12. 16. *By the hands of the Apostles were many Signs and Wonders wrought among the people: and the multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem brought Sick Folks, and*
R *them*

them which were vexed with unclean Spirits ; and they were healed every one. These extraordinary Cures were not performed by the common Christians, which were now grown numerous enough ; but by *Peter* and the *Other Apostles* : And when any other particular Person was blessed with such extraordinary Privilege, he is named as exerting such power, and distinguished from the rest of the Disciples. Thus we find *St. Stephen* mentioned as *a Man full of Faith, and of the Holy Ghost, who did great Wonders and Miracles among the people.* Acts vi. 5, 8. And *Philip* did Miracles in *Samaria*, and baptized both men and women. But tho' he baptized the Converts in *Samaria*, and by that initiated them into Christianity, (which was a plain Declaration that they were *Believers*) yet no Signs were done by these Christians ; for they did not receive the *Holy Ghost* till some time after this, when *Peter* and *John* came thither, and prayed that they might receive the *Holy Ghost* ; for as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord. Chap. viii. 14--17. It is evident from hence, that *some* Christians professed openly enough a *Faith* in Christ, and were baptized in his Name, and yet did not receive the *Holy Ghost*, so as to work Miracles, till God, according to his good Pleasure, and as he saw fit, was pleased to grant this Privilege : and in consequence *all* Christians did not receive the mi-

raculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, but such only as were deemed worthy of such extraordinary Communication.

Whilst I am speaking concerning this extraordinary Endowment which many of the First Christians had, one cannot omit to take notice of *Two* Instances that have something very peculiar in them.

The *First* is, That of *One*, who was *not* an *Apostle*, who yet *imparted* the *Holy Ghost* to another. It seems to have been a peculiar Privilege of the *Apostles* by Imposition of Hands to impart the Holy Ghost: When therefore *Ananias* imparted the Holy Ghost to *St. Paul*, it must be observed, that He had a particular Direction for that purpose. For tho' he, and probably many others, had themselves, or were *filled* with the Holy Ghost, yet it does not appear that they ever did, or could, communicate it to Others, excepting this one Case. However, *St. Paul* having now received it, as he did his Eye-sight, immediately began to execute the Office to which he was called. *Acts ix. 17, &c.*

The other Case is, That of the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon *Cornelius* and his Family, who seem to have been, or more properly, were, the *First-fruits of the Gentiles*. What was peculiar here was, that the Holy Ghost fell on them *before* they were *baptized*. For whilst *St. Peter* was preaching to them our Saviour, that He was *Lord of all*, that

He was *risen from the Dead*, and was appointed Judge of quick and dead; that all the Prophets gave witness to him, that thro' his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins — while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. The Effect of this Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them was, that Peter, and those with him, heard them speak with Tongues, and magnify God. When this Fact was so notorious, St. Peter asked, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* Acts x. 36--48.

In this Instance miraculous Powers or Signs followed them that believed, before they were baptized. But in what manner soever the Holy Ghost descended, the Churches walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and were multiplied. Acts ix. 31. Or as it is Acts xiii. 52. *The disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.* They all had inward Comfort and Satisfaction, and they went on increasing and multiplying, notwithstanding the Opposition they met with, either from Persecution by the Jews, or from the Distresses which Paul and Barnabas had fallen into; and they believed, and spoke very freely, the Truths of the Gospel, openly alledging that Jesus was the Christ. But that every particular Disciple was enabled to work Signs and Wonders of any

any sort, seems to have been a Fact unknown to St. *Luke*, since he mentions so frequently the *Signs and Wonders* done by the *Apostles*, and names some particular Persons, who made Converts by such extraordinary Acts, *vid. cap. xiv. 3.* but never observes, that *all* Christians had it in their Powers to exert so remarkable an Endowment, tho' all received *spiritual Gifts*.

But tho' particular Instances are not producible, are there not some Texts which imply, that *all* that were *baptized* received the *Holy Ghost*? And if *all* were *filled* with the *Holy Ghost*, had not *all* supernatural Gifts? The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* says, *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost—if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance.* Chap. vi. 4—6. It is plain from these Words, that Those who were *once enlightened*, and those who were *partakers of the Holy Ghost*, are the same: Now as all Christians are *enlightened* with the Knowledge of the Doctrines of Christ, and in consequence were all Baptized, (for the Doctrine of *Baptisms* was just before mentioned as a *Principle* or *Foundation*) hence *all* Christians must have been *Partakers* of the *Holy Ghost*. The same may seem to be inferr'd from the Passage of St. *Mark*, under our present Consideration; in which such as *believe*, is of the same Extent

tent with such as are *baptized* in the preceding Verse. *He that Believeth and is Baptized, shall be saved — And these signs shall follow them that believe.* Now as *all* Christians were *baptized*, must not the Promise of the Signs here made, extend to *all*? And when St. Paul says — *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal* — 1 Cor. xii. 7. the Conclusion must be, that every particular Person did *partake* of the *Holy Ghost*.

All this Difficulty vanishes, if the Writers of the New Testament did not mean by being *Partakers* of the *Holy Ghost*, a being vested with a Power of exerting *miraculous Acts*. If they sometimes meant no more by *partaking of the Holy Ghost*, than a *Boldness in speaking* the Truths of the Gospel; sometimes a *Conviction*, or a *full Persuasion* of Mind, that Jesus was the Christ; sometimes a *Zeal* in striving to *excel to the edifying of the Church*; sometimes an Increase in spiritual *Knowledge*, or *understanding* the Scriptures; sometimes *good Dispositions* arising from a Belief of God thro' Christ — *All* Christians might have some or other of These Gifts, and thus be *Partakers* of the *Holy Ghost*, and yet not be enabled to work any *Miracle*. *Every Man* was to profit Himself and Others by the Gift he had, be it what it would: If he *understood* the Scriptures; if he *believed* in God the Father; if he *believed* in Christ; if he *spoke* the

the Word with *Boldness* ; if he *endured* in Times of Trial with Courage and Resolution ; if he resisted unto Death, unmoveable,—— These and such like Endowments were the Gifts by which a Manifestation of the Spirit was made, as well as the *miraculous* Gifts, which were dispensed according to the good Will and Pleasure of God.

It is said indeed by St. *Peter*, Acts ii. 38. *Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.* But it is plain, that he does not mean that *every one* that was baptized should *receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost* ; but his Exhortation is, that every one should be baptized : and then a Declaration is made, that they should *receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost*. Not that *every one* was to have a Power of working *Miracles* ; but that every one that believed, and was baptized, should be enabled to act as a true Christian. Some should speak boldly for the Truth : Some should bear Evils for it with Patience, with Courage, with Resolution : All would be mightily confirmed by what they saw done by Men of all Conditions, who had miraculous Endowments, and extraordinary Qualifications committed to them.

Nor can more be intended by these Words, since we find the Brethren commanded to LOOK OUT for men full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom,

Wisdom, whom the Twelve were to appoint to the Office of Deacons. *Acts* vi. 3. If *all* had these Qualifications, or supernatural Endowments, and could do, as *Stephen* did, *great Wonders and Miracles among the people*, ver. 8. there seems to have been no Occasion to *look out* for Men of the Abilities here required, since *every* Man was in Possession of them. If *every* Man has the Power of *thinking* and *moving*, would any one require another to *look out* for a Person who has these Powers; or might not the First Man that was met with answer these Characters?

And so again, when our Saviour said—*He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow Rivers of Living Water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. John* vii. 38. General as these Words are, they do not imply that every Believer in Christ should receive *miraculous Powers*; but that such as believed in him should be fully enabled to *teach* and practise the Doctrine of Life, being confirmed in the Faith by the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

But it is needless to examine more Passages of Scripture relating to this Subject. Enough is said, to shew that the Meaning of our Saviour in the Passage of *St. Mark* under Consideration is no more than this; — “ Go and
“ teach all Nations, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*,
“ and *preach the Gospel to every Creature*. No
“ Distin-

“ Distinction is, or will be, made betwixt
 “ them ; but whosoever *believeth* and is *bap-*
 “ *tized* shall be *saved*, and shall partake of
 “ the Holy Ghost. And *these Signs shall fol-*
 “ *low them that believe*, be they *Jews* or *Gen-*
 “ *tiles* : In my Name shall Devils be cast
 “ out, and Miracles of all sorts shall be per-
 “ formed, by both *Jews* and *Gentiles*” —
 in Attestation of that Great Truth, that *Jesus*
is the Christ the Son of God, in such manner as
 shall seem most proper, and according to the
 Good-will of God.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

P. 32. l. 16. for *it be*, r. *it to be*. And p.
 54. l. 4. for *We believe*, r. *we to believe*.
 P. 64. l. 11. for *Ec.* r. xvii. 3.

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